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Editorials

We mourn a monarch who transformed our nation

Elizabeth II bequeaths a monarchy and a nation transformed from those she inherited as a young princess in 1952 – and transformed for the better. She saw more than a dozen prime ministers, from Churchill to Boris Johnson – and most recently, Liz Truss – come into power, as well as a similar number of US presidents and countless other heads of state.

Her rule falls easily into the line of historic reigns that includes those of the first Elizabeth and Victoria, and into a tradition of selfless service epitomised by her father – George VI – and grandfather – George V. Indeed, in the long and not always glittering pantheon of the monarchy, she ranks highly indeed.

Not least among her achievements was to act as a unifying symbol to a nation that has faced its share of trauma and terror. Seven decades ago and more, Britain was a white, deferential, class-ridden society embarking upon a long, genteel journey of relative economic and diplomatic decline. Many Britons, interviewed for Mass Observation in 1953, believed that the new Queen had not even been born as normal humans are. Today we know rather more about the royal family than we might care to – and that they are all too human.

The “New Elizabethan age” fancied by many in 1953, with pioneering developments in air transport, space exploration and science and technology to rival the achievements of Drake and Raleigh, quickly soured. Economic failure at home and military failures abroad, with a sometimes chaotic and bloody retreat from empire, were difficult to adjust to.

By the time of Elizabeth’s silver jubilee in 1977, her realm had become the economic sick man of Europe. Her image was defaced with a safety pin on a Sex Pistols record cover. The age of deference had truly expired.

At times, endemic inflation, mass unemployment, strikes and IRA terror made the nation seem ungovernable. The economic shocks and riots of the 1980s – and more recently – were scarcely less dramatic. By the time of her golden jubilee, things were calmer – though the atmosphere at the platinum jubilee was more tense.

The monarchy survived these (and other, self-inflicted) crises because of her singular devotion to duty. She was a queen for the bad times as well as the good. Part of her success came from knowing her place in a vibrant democracy: unpolitical but concerned, onlooker rather than participant.

The Queen followed the example of most of her immediate predecessors in obeying the doctrine of constitutional monarchy famously formulated by Walter Bagehot in the 19th century, with merely the right to advise, to warn, and to be consulted. In the hung parliaments of 1974 and 2010 – and in the succession of Conservative prime ministers, before they were elected, in 1957 and 1963 – she punctiliously insisted on the politicians and civil service sorting things out and keeping “the palace” (ie, her) as far out of it as possible.

On almost all of the issues of the day, she showed little wish to be a player, though all of her prime ministers attested to her knowledge and wisdom. Only on Scottish independence did she ever push the boundaries of constitutional propriety – during the first wave of agitation for home rule in 1977, and again before the close referendum result of 2014. David Cameron said that

she greeted the news that her kingdom was to remain united with a “purr”. She could be forgiven for that.



The Queen, with Prince Philip, waves to the crowd after her coronation at Westminster Abbey in 1953 (STF/AFP/Getty)

During the public outpouring of grief after the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, the Queen’s usually sure touch for public opinion did, for once, desert her. As in long tradition, the royal standard did not fly at Buckingham Palace while the monarch was absent, but the nation wanted to see a flag at half mast; the Queen also wished to stay in Balmoral with her family to deal with what was a private tragedy.

The public reaction to that was hostile, but Elizabeth’s recovery was rapid. Following the advice of her then prime minister, Tony Blair, she returned to London, met the crowds, and addressed the nation on television. It was a dangerous moment, and that short, affectionate, human tribute to Diana saved much more than the day. She proved herself devoted to the Commonwealth, too: an underrated international body second only to the UN in size and diversity. As a multicultural model of cooperation it transcended its origins as a sentimental club, and also served as a vehicle for reconciliation.

From the hand of friendship she offered to former “terrorists” and enemies of the British state, such as Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya and Archbishop Makarios of Cyprus, to her historic meeting

with Sinn Féin's Martin McGuinness and her visit to Ireland in 2011, she always placed duty before whatever personal feelings she may have had. She cannot have enjoyed entertaining the likes of Nicolae Ceausescu at Buckingham Palace, but she did it all the same to help the Foreign Office. More agreeably, she made her admiration of Nelson Mandela abundantly clear.

A Christian woman in every way, she practised what she talked about during her Christmas broadcasts and other speeches. Her faith helped her to deal with meeting former Irish terrorists of the kind who had succeeded in murdering members of her own family, including Earl Mountbatten, in 1979. She prayed with popes in Rome, and reached out to leaders of every faith.

She needed strength to deal with problems very near to her. Her own long marriage endured, but may not have been without turbulence. The unhappy marriages of her children were less durable – and were explored by the press in minute detail. With Prince Philip, the Queen tried, not always successfully, to balance the needs of a voracious public and the media appetite for gossip with the dignity required of the household of a head of state.

Her decision to pay more in tax, after the “annus horribilis” and the fire at Windsor Castle in 1992, was welcome, though it was overdue. The unearthing of some ancient home movies, showing the young Princess Elizabeth, aged about seven, healing Hitler, proved not to be as sensational as they seemed at the time.

Now her son becomes the King, with another name redolent of monarchies past, albeit with a more chequered record than that of either the first or the second Elizabeth. His is a simple yet challenging task: to carry into the next decades the same blend of humility, duty, service, wisdom and grandeur that made his mother such a “legend”, in the ancient and the modern sense.

At this sad time, we can do no better today than to echo the words Elizabeth used at another poignant moment, in her own tribute to Diana years ago – that we now have “a chance to show to the whole world the British nation united in grief and respect. Thank God for someone who made many, many people happy”.

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Elizabeth II, UK's longest-serving monarch, dies at 96



The Queen at Balmoral on Tuesday as she waited to appoint the new prime minister (PA)

SIMON MURPHY

CHIEF REPORTER

Queen Elizabeth II, Britain's longest-serving monarch, has died aged 96, with her son Charles succeeding her as the nation's new king. The Queen died "peacefully" at Balmoral yesterday afternoon, according to Buckingham Palace, having spent 70

years as head of state, outlasting her predecessors and overseeing monumental changes in social and political life.

Leading tributes from around the world, King Charles III described his mother as “much loved” and a “cherished sovereign”.

The official announcement came at 6.40pm, shortly after senior royals rushed to Balmoral to be at the Queen’s side. Earlier in the day, the House of Commons had been told that she was under medical supervision because doctors were concerned for her health.



The Queen was troubled by mobility issues in recent months and had been forced to cancel some engagements (PA)

Charles, whose wife, Camilla, is now Queen Consort, said the death of his “beloved” mother was a “moment of the greatest sadness for me and all members of my family”.

The 73-year-old automatically became head of state on the Queen’s passing, as ruler of the United Kingdom and more than a dozen Commonwealth nations – a role for which he has spent a lifetime in preparation.

“During this period of mourning and change, my family and I will be comforted and sustained by our knowledge of the respect and deep affection in which the Queen was so widely held,” said the King. He will return to London today at the start of 10 days

of national mourning, during which the Queen will lie in state in Westminster.



The union jack that flies over Buckingham Palace in London is lowered after the death of Queen Elizabeth II (AP)

Prime minister Liz Truss, who had been informed of the monarch's death at 4.30pm, two hours before it was publicly announced, spoke outside No 10. She described the Queen as the "rock on which modern Britain was built", adding: "Our country has grown and flourished under her reign. Britain is the great country it is today because of her.

"Through thick and thin, Queen Elizabeth II provided us with the stability and the strength that we needed. She was the very spirit of Great Britain – and that spirit will endure. And with the passing of the second Elizabethan age, we usher in a new era in the magnificent history of our great country – exactly as Her Majesty would have wished – by saying the words, 'God save the King.'"

Kensington Palace said that the Queen's grandson William, now first in line to the throne, and his wife Kate will be known as the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and Cambridge.



Prime minister Liz Truss addresses the nation following the Queen's death (Getty)

The Queen's passing comes 17 months after the death of her husband, the Duke of Edinburgh, to whom she was married for 73 years. World leaders were among those who joined in paying tribute. US president Joe Biden and his wife Jill said that the Queen had "led always with grace, an unwavering commitment to duty, and the incomparable power of her example".

Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer described the Queen as a "remarkable sovereign", while former prime minister Sir Tony Blair said the nation had lost "not just our monarch but the matriarch of our nation". Former prime minister David Cameron described the Queen as "the world's greatest public servant" and "the world's most experienced diplomat".

Floral tributes were laid outside Windsor Castle, with the crowds outside so big that staff members returning to the castle struggled to drive through the main entrance. Planned strikes by rail and postal workers have been called off.



The former Prince of Wales is now King Charles III (Getty)

The queen's passing leaves a nation in mourning after her decades of dedicated public service. In recent months she was increasingly reliant on a walking stick to carry out her duties, and was forced to cancel some appearances.

Throughout times of national crisis, the Queen always provided a reassuring presence, notably addressing Britain during the early days of the coronavirus pandemic and reminding the public that they would all “meet again”, in an echo of Dame Vera Lynn's Second World War song.

She was born on 21 April 1926 at 17 Bruton Street, London, at the height of that year's General Strike, to her parents Albert and Elizabeth, the Duke and Duchess of York.



The Queen in 1957, four years after her coronation (PA)

From her early youth, Princess Elizabeth was one of the most famous people in the world: hospital wards were named after her, a popular song was composed in her honour, her face appeared on a Newfoundland stamp, and a slice of Antarctica was renamed Princess Elizabeth Land.

The Queen was a fixture of British life for seven decades, leading the country out of empire and the aftermath of the Second World War, and through decades of change and upheaval, with rarely so much as a day off.

Her quiet self-possession in the face of crisis, alongside her gravity, patriotism, strong sense of duty and utter dedication to a position she saw as simply her job, has earned her a place as one of the great monarchs of her line, worthy of comparison with her role model, Victoria.

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King Charles pays tribute to ‘cherished’ late mother



Charles has made his first statement as monarch, paying tribute to his ‘beloved mother’ (Getty)

SIMON MURPHY

CHIEF REPORTER

King Charles III has paid tribute to his “beloved mother” Queen Elizabeth II, Britain’s longest-serving monarch, after she died aged 96.

As the Queen's passing was met with an outpouring of grief, Charles – the nation's new king – led the mourning, saying “her loss will be deeply felt throughout the country, the realms and the Commonwealth, and by countless people around the world”. In his first statement as monarch, issued shortly after his mother's death was announced, the 73-year-old said his family “mourn profoundly the passing of a cherished sovereign and a much-loved mother”.

The Queen – who was head of state for an historic 70 years – died peacefully at Balmoral, Scotland, yesterday afternoon, Buckingham Palace said. In an address to the nation outside No 10, prime minister Liz Truss – who was only appointed to her role by the Queen on Tuesday – said it was “the passing of the second Elizabethan age”.

She also announced Charles's new title, saying: “Today the crown passes, as it has done for more than 1,000 years, to our new monarch, to our new head of state, His Majesty King Charles III.” Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer described the Queen as a “remarkable sovereign”, while former prime minister Sir Tony Blair said the nation had lost “not just our monarch but the matriarch of our nation”. In a written statement, Charles – whose wife, Camilla, is now Queen Consort – said: “The death of my beloved mother, Her Majesty The Queen, is a moment of the greatest sadness for me and all members of my family.



Members of royal household staff posts a notice on the gates of the Buckingham Palace announcing the death of the Queen yesterday (PA)

“We mourn profoundly the passing of a cherished sovereign and a much-loved mother. I know her loss will be deeply felt throughout the country, the realms and the Commonwealth, and by countless people around the world. During this period of mourning and change, my family and I will be comforted and sustained by our knowledge of the respect and deep affection in which the Queen was so widely held.”

At 6.30pm yesterday, a tweet from the Royal Family’s Twitter account said: “The Queen died peacefully at Balmoral this afternoon. The King and The Queen Consort will remain at Balmoral this evening and will return to London tomorrow.” Officials also brought a notice confirming the Queen’s death to the gates of Buckingham Palace, where the flag has been lowered to half-mast.

Dressed in black, Ms Truss hailed the Queen as the “rock on which modern Britain was built”, describing her as the “very spirit of Great Britain”. She said: “Our country has grown and flourished under her reign. Britain is the great country it is today because of her.” The prime minister added: “Through thick and thin, Queen Elizabeth II provided us with the stability and the strength that we needed. She was the very spirit of Great Britain – and that spirit will endure.”



The Queen welcomed Ms Truss during the audience at Balmoral on Tuesday (PA)

She said: “In the difficult days ahead, we will come together with our friends ... across the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth and the world ... to celebrate her extraordinary lifetime of service.

“It is a day of great loss, but Queen Elizabeth II leaves a great legacy. Today the Crown passes – as it has done for more than a thousand years – to our new monarch, our new head of state: His Majesty King Charles III. With the King’s family, we mourn the loss of his mother. And as we mourn, we must come together as a people to support him. To help him bear the awesome responsibility that he now carries for us all.

“We offer him our loyalty and devotion just as his mother devoted so much to so many for so long. And with the passing of the second Elizabethan age, we usher in a new era in the magnificent history of our great country – exactly as Her Majesty would have wished – by saying the words ... God save the King.”

Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer described the Queen as a “remarkable sovereign”, adding: “It is a deep, private loss for the royal family and all our thoughts are with them at this time. The nation shares in their grief. We will always treasure Queen

Elizabeth II's life of service and devotion to our nation and the Commonwealth; our longest-serving and greatest monarch.

“Above the clashes of politics, she stood not for what the nation fought over, but what it agreed upon. As Britain changed rapidly around her, this dedication became the still point of our turning world. So as our great Elizabethan era comes to an end, we will honour the late Queen's memory by keeping alive the values of public service she embodied.

“For 70 years, Queen Elizabeth II stood as the head of our country. But, in spirit, she stood amongst us.”

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Queen to lie in state while King visits home nations



Hundreds of thousands of mourners are expected to attend in Westminster (Getty)

**ANDREW WOODCOCK
ALASTAIR JAMIESON**

Queen Elizabeth II will lie in state in Westminster as part of 10 days of national mourning beginning today. Union flags will be lowered and flown at half-mast on royal residences, government

buildings and military establishments and books of condolence opened at British embassies across the world.

King Charles III will formally be declared king by the Accession Council, after which a proclamation will be read at St James's Palace and he will meet Ms Truss's cabinet. Having received a motion of condolence in Westminster Hall, King Charles will then begin a tour of the UK home nations including Northern Ireland and Wales, with a brief ceremony in each. The Queen's coffin is expected to lie in state for three days at Westminster Hall in advance of her state funeral at Westminster Abbey in central London, a ceremony presided over by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

She will finally be laid to rest at St George's Chapel at Windsor Castle, where her late husband, Prince Philip, and both of her parents, the Queen Mother and George VI, are also buried.



The Queen visiting a First World War installation at the Tower of London in 2014 (PA)

The day of her funeral and that of the coronation of King Charles III will both be national holidays.

The Queen's lying in state is expected to attract hundreds of thousands of mourners. Her death in Scotland means there could even be a second lying in state, most likely in St Giles's Cathedral in Edinburgh,

The last major period of national mourning was in honour of the Duke of Edinburgh following his passing on 9 April 2021.

He did not lie in state, in accordance with his wishes, but in any case mass gatherings were against the law at the time due to the Covid crisis. His wife of 73 years was forced to sit alone at his funeral because of the social distancing measures, a hardship she bore as stoically as ever. The last person to lie in state in the UK was the Queen Mother in 2002.

King Charles III will formally be declared king by the Accession Council, after which a proclamation will be read at St James's Palace and he will meet Ms Truss's cabinet. Having received a motion of condolence in Westminster Hall, King Charles will then begin a tour of the UK home nations including Northern Ireland and Wales, with a brief ceremony in each.



The monarch's final resting place will be St George's Chapel at Windsor Castle (PA)

Controversially, no period of mourning was declared in Britain following the death of Princess Diana in 1997, despite the extent of public sentiment, but one was held in 2005 as a gesture of respect for the 52 people killed in the Islamist terror attacks on London on 7 July that year. One of the most significant to have occurred in living memory in Britain came in 1965, following the death of Sir Winston Churchill.

His body lay in state at St Paul's Cathedral in London for three days so that mourners could pay their final tributes to the prime minister, who famously held his nerve to steer the Allied Forces to victory over Nazi Germany.

Queen Victoria requested that she should not lie in state. When she died at Osborne House on the Isle of Wight in 1901, a semi-private lying in state was arranged for three days to allow Victoria's servants and friends to pay their respects.

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Inspirational monarch who ruled with grace and dignity

Profoundly dedicated to the UK and the Commonwealth, Queen Elizabeth II oversaw 15 prime ministers in 70 years



The Queen reigned at a time of great social and political change (PA)

**SARAH BRADFORD
JOE SOMMERLAD**

Queen Elizabeth II was the longest-reigning monarch in British history and figurehead of the nation for over 70 years. She celebrated her silver jubilee in 1977, her golden jubilee in 2002, her diamond jubilee in 2012 and her platinum jubilee this year.

She was born on 21 April 1926 at 17 Bruton Street, London, the home of her maternal grandparents, the Earl and Countess of Strathmore. Her father, Albert, Duke of York, was the second son of King George V; her mother, Elizabeth, Duchess of York, was the former Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon.

Significantly, for a monarch who during her lifetime was to experience greater social and political change than any of her immediate predecessors, her birth took place during the 1926 General Strike. From her early youth, Princess Elizabeth was the most famous child in the world: chocolates, china and hospital wards were named after her, a popular song was composed for her, her face appeared on a Newfoundland stamp and a slice of Antarctica became Princess Elizabeth Land. Yet, at home in the nursery, she developed into an orderly, self-contained, disciplined child, the responsible elder sister to Princess Margaret (born 1930).

Her childhood was happy and secure, with fond parents and the opportunity to indulge her love of dogs and horses. But everything changed when, in December 1936, her uncle, Edward VIII, abdicated in order to marry Wallis Simpson. Princess Elizabeth's father became king as George VI and she herself heir presumptive to the British throne. The family moved into Buckingham Palace, surrounded by the panoply and restrictions of British royalty.

Princess Elizabeth and her sister spent the duration of the Second World War at Windsor Castle where they were sent for safety as London came under attack from Luftwaffe bombing raids. They were educated in the far from rigorous manner of upper-class children of the day by a governess, Marion Crawford, although Elizabeth, in view of her future role, was taught excellent French and had lessons in British constitutional history from the vice-provost of Eton, Sir Henry Marten (the story goes that the absent-minded Sir Henry, fresh from

teaching the boys in the college below the castle, sometimes addressed the future Queen as “gentlemen”).

Her parents saw to it that she met and entertained important visitors such as US first lady Eleanor Roosevelt and General Dwight D Eisenhower, as part of her future training, and on her 16th birthday she took on her first ceremonial role, being installed as honorary colonel of the Grenadier Guards. In the last months of the war, she took a course in the Auxiliary Territorial Service, which involved learning to drive a truck, change its tyres and understand the working of the engine. She prided herself on being a fast, skilful driver.



Young Elizabeth with one of her horses (AFP/Getty)

Princess Elizabeth’s worldwide public debut came at the time of her 21st birthday on 21 April 1947 on her first tour outside England, a state visit with her parents and sister to the Union of South Africa, then still a self-governing dominion and part of the British Empire. The post-war years saw the break-up of the Empire and the beginning of its transformation into the Commonwealth, an association of former colonies and

dominions with the British monarch at its head.

In what was to become her best-known broadcast, the young princess dedicated herself to the service of the Empire and Commonwealth: “I can make my solemn act of dedication now,” she said. “I declare... that my whole life... shall be devoted to your service, and the service of the great imperial family to which we all belong.” The pledge she gave that day remained a constant for her. As head of the Commonwealth, her devotion to the organisation was lifelong.

In November of that same year, she married the former Prince Philip of Greece, who became Duke of Edinburgh. Prince Philip was the son of Prince Andrew of Greece and Princess Alice of Battenberg and related to Princess Elizabeth through both his maternal and paternal bloodlines. Through collateral

descendants of George III, he was her fourth cousin once removed. The marriage was the first royal festival in grey post-war Britain, then in the grip of an austerity regime. Winston Churchill called the wedding “a flash of colour on the hard road we have to travel”.

Within a year of her wedding, Princess Elizabeth had given birth to her heir, Prince Charles, born 14 November 1948, and two years later, Princess Anne, born 15 August 1950. For two years, she and her husband enjoyed the freedom of naval life in Malta, where he was a serving officer, but the grave illness of the king brought an end to this brief period of normality. Princess Elizabeth had to deputise for her father on many ceremonial occasions in the summer of 1950 and familiarised herself with state papers.

In the autumn of 1951, she and Prince Philip visited Canada and the US for the first time. On that tour, the princess's private secretary, Martin Charteris, had travelled with the papers covering the princess's accession under his bed. On 6 February 1952, when the princess and her husband were in Kenya, the king died suddenly in his sleep. His daughter succeeded him as Queen Elizabeth II and was crowned the



Winston Churchill and the Queen at the opening of a youth centre in Chigwell, Essex, 12 July 1951 (Getty)

following year as Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Queen of her other Realms and Territories and Head of the Commonwealth. Her coronation on 2 June 1953 was televised, sparking the beginning of a media revolution as millions in Britain and around the world watched the ceremony. There was huge public enthusiasm for the young Queen who seemed to represent both a link with the historic past and a new future. Churchill, her prime minister at the time, predicted a new Elizabethan age. Bernard Baruch called her “the world's sweetheart”.

With her handsome husband and two young children, the Queen was held up as a moral example and the idealised representative of family virtues. This concept of the monarchy, which in later years was to rebound against it, was spelt out in 1955 by *The Times*, then still very much the voice of the establishment, when it thundered against the proposed marriage between Princess Margaret and group captain Peter Townsend, a divorced man:

“Now in the 20th-century conception of the monarchy the Queen has come to be the symbol of every side of life of this society, its universal representative in whom her people see their better selves ideally reflected; and since part of their ideal is family life, the Queen’s family has its own part in the reflection.”

Yet by the popular press at the time, Princess Margaret’s renunciation of Townsend on the grounds of duty and religion was seen as a forced sacrifice to outmoded concepts, which, by implication, included the monarchy.



Dancing with her then fiancé, Philip Mountbatten, at the Assembly Rooms, Edinburgh (PA)

Post-imperial disillusionment with the establishment after the failed Suez expedition in 1956 brought the first criticisms of the court and even the Queen herself. In August 1957, Lord Altrincham attacked the court for being “tweedy”, failing to live

with the times and identifying the monarchy with a narrow aristocratic class. The same “second-rate” courtiers were responsible for the “prim little sermons” that the Queen delivered in the style of a “priggish schoolgirl, captain of the hockey team, a prefect and a recent candidate for confirmation”.

No change had taken place in the palace ethos, he (correctly) claimed, since the reign of the Queen’s father. Yet, in the prevailing atmosphere of royal worship, his sentiments caused national outrage and he himself was physically attacked. The broadcaster Malcolm Muggeridge analysed the current passion for the royal family as “the royal soap opera ... a sort of substitute or ersatz religion”. He was banned from the BBC. Yet the social revolution that was taking place in late-Fifties and early-Sixties Britain could not fail to have its effect on attitudes towards an unmodernised monarchy. The Queen was shocked when in 1963, for the first time, she was booed by left-wing demonstrators during the visit of Greece’s King Paul and his German wife, Queen Frederika, who were regarded as unacceptably right-wing.



Her quiet self-possession in the face of crisis, her dignity, patriotism, strong sense of duty and utter dedication to what she saw as her job, has earned her a place as one of the great monarchs



The same period saw the diminution of the royal prerogative in one significant area. In constitutional theory, the monarch has the right to appoint the prime minister but, by the end of the

20th century, this exercise of the prerogative had for all practical purposes ceased to exist. A succession of prime ministers offered the Queen little choice. When Churchill resigned in 1955, the fact that Anthony Eden had long been regarded as his political heir apparent, made it inevitable that the Queen would appoint him as his successor.

Two years later, the Queen's reluctance to enter the political arena left the choice in effect to her private secretary, Michael Adeane, in consultation with ruling Conservative grandees. The Labour Party then announced that parties should decide their own leaders, an option later followed by the Tories in 1965, which, although designed to save the Queen the embarrassment of having to choose between rival claimants to the leadership of a party, effectively removed the element of royal choice. This was prompted by the machinations of Harold Macmillan at the time of his resignation in October 1963 when, determined to block the succession of RA "Rab" Butler, he put forward the candidature of Alec Douglas-Home. The Queen's acceptance of Macmillan's scheme to favour the aristocratic Earl of Home over the meritocratic Butler, has been described as the biggest political misjudgement of her reign; she was seen as the instrument of a "magic circle" of Conservative grandees.

As the Queen's experience of public affairs grew immeasurably over the long duration of her reign, the most important aspect of her role, "to consult, advise and warn" her prime ministers, did not diminish. During the early years of her rule, her conversations with Churchill often turned on their mutual interest for racing; although the aristocratic, Foreign Office-trained Eden took a more aloof attitude, the Queen was kept informed of all aspects of the Suez Crisis, including the secret agreements with France and Israel to attack Egypt.



Elizabeth and Ronald Reagan on the 40th anniversary of D-Day, Normandy, 1984 (Getty)

Macmillan regarded her with reverence as well as affection, writing her long, informative letters. With her first Labour prime minister, Harold Wilson, her relations were of the warmest and it was largely due to his fondness and respect for her that a potentially damaging crisis over the increase in the royal civil list was avoided in 1975.

Conservative leader Edward Heath, who succeeded Wilson in 1970, displayed an undisguised disrespect for the Queen's cherished Commonwealth and downplayed her overseas role – effectively blocking her attendance at the Commonwealth conference in Singapore in 1971 because of member state attitudes on the question of arms to South Africa.

It was gradually becoming a truism that the Queen got on better with Labour leaders than Conservative ones. James Callaghan, another “old Labour” stalwart, had the utmost respect for the Queen's good sense in politics and world affairs, but the Commonwealth was once again a source of disagreement when Margaret Thatcher became Conservative prime minister, principally over the question of sanctions against South Africa. Thatcher was, nonetheless, the most loyal of prime ministers, even though it could be said that her assault on the established institutions of Britain turned unfavourable attention on the monarchy.



State visit: with Charles in Avignon, May 1972 (Getty)

John Major, although instinctively loyal, was prime minister through some of the most difficult years the monarchy had yet endured. It was his unfortunate task to have to announce the separation of Prince Charles and Diana, Princess of Wales, and to preside over the controversy that resulted in the Queen's agreement to pay income tax. He did little to forestall the decommissioning of the royal yacht *Britannia*, which took place in December 1997 during the first year of his successor, Tony Blair. Although the Queen accepted the decision with her usual pragmatism, she mourned the loss of a yacht that had provided her with so many happy memories. In retrospect, many people now think the decision a mistake, for security as much as ceremonial reasons, and that it would have been better to commission a new yacht that could be shared with the government.

Blair continued the tradition of consultation despite the somewhat presidential style of his premiership, and the tendency of the press to refer to his wife Cherie Blair as "the first lady" epitomised the republican leanings of New Labour by her refusal to curtsy to the Queen (who is said to have remarked: "I can see her knees stiffening when I come into the room"). Blair, with his own disregard for tradition, changed the established routine weekly audience with the Queen from Tuesday to Wednesday but the Queen let it be known that she was unmoved by the change and the palace and No 10 cooperated smoothly in the anxious period following the death of Diana. There was a slight ruffling of feathers when Blair demanded a more prominent role than was traditionally assigned to the prime minister on the occasion of the funeral of the Queen Mother in 2002, a battle that, for once, Blair failed to win.

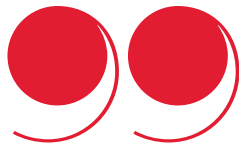
Gordon Brown was fondly received by the Queen when he moved from chancellor of the Exchequer to succeed Blair in No 10 in 2007, Her Majesty always retained a warm affection for Scots, having found sanctuary at Balmoral in times of trial throughout her life. His departure after an unhappy three years

later marked the only time the royal met with a prime minister's whole family, including Brown's young children.

He was succeeded in turn by David Cameron, who as a boy had attended Heatherdown, the same exclusive boarding school as the Queen's youngest son Prince Edward and even co-starred in a school production of *Toad of Toad Hall* alongside his royal classmate. However, Her Majesty had always made a principle of staying above the political fray, as far as possible, and was ever reluctant to intervene in such portentous matters of state as the Scottish independence referendum or Brexit, even if she privately held strong feelings about them.



The image of the Queen's family as an ideal, which had been so assiduously promoted, imploded spectacularly with the successive scandals and divorces of the royal children in the 1990s



It was Cameron who embarrassed her on these grounds when he was recorded in September 2014 reporting that she had “purred” when he had told her Scotland had narrowly voted against breaking away from the UK. Relations were much steadier with the industrious but battle-scarred Theresa May but rocky again with her 14th prime minister, Boris Johnson, who, like Cameron, compromised her steady record of impartiality when he drew her into the political mire against her will by requesting the proroguing of parliament ahead of a key deadline in British negotiations with the Europe Union in October 2019.

But undoubtedly the most difficult problem Queen Elizabeth II faced in recent decades was the monarchy's relationship with Britain's increasingly voracious media. Compared to the adulation of the Fifties, the mood of the Sixties was one of satire and indifference. The monarchy responded at the time with a popularity campaign, of which the most memorable artefact is the television documentary *The Royal Family* (1969), which, for the first time, presented the Queen and her children – of which there were now four, Prince Andrew being born in 1960 and Edward following in 1964 – as human beings. Hugely popular at the time, the film was later criticised for destroying the mythic aspects of monarchy and “letting daylight in upon the magic”.

The public began to react to this presentation of the royal family with increasing interest, which reached the point of obsession with the “fairytale marriage” of Prince Charles to Lady Diana Spencer, a world media event in 1981. Princess Anne's marriage to officer and fellow horseman, Captain Mark Phillips, in 1973, had also been the occasion for a royal show, as was the Duke of York's marriage to Sarah Ferguson in 1986.

But the image of the Queen's family as an ideal, which had been so assiduously promoted, imploded spectacularly with the successive scandals and divorces of the royal children in the 1990s. Andrew Morton's 1992 book, *Diana, Her True Story*, revealed the “fairytale” to be a sham of bitterness and adultery, offering a view of the royal family as “dysfunctional”. The Queen herself described 1992 as her “annus horribilis”, the revelations of the Morton book followed by the publication of compromising photographs of the Duchess of York and a devastating fire that ravaged Windsor Castle that November.

Public reaction – prompted by a debate about the cost of the monarchy and the revelation that the Queen, alone among her subjects, did not pay income tax – was that she should pay for the damage herself. When it was announced that the Queen had agreed to pay tax on her private fortune, it played as if she had been forced into it by events, although negotiations had in fact been under way for months.



The Queen and the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge thank workers for their efforts during the pandemic, 2020 (Getty)

The break-up of Charles and Diana's marriage was accompanied by a media war between the estranged couple that was highly damaging to the public image of the monarchy. In 1994, the Prince of Wales revealed in a television profile that he had committed adultery "after the irretrievable breakdown of his marriage"; the programme was accompanied by an authorised biography by broadcaster Jonathan Dimbleby, in which the Queen was portrayed as a remote mother and the Duke of Edinburgh as an unsympathetic, bullying father. In November 1995, Diana retaliated with an emotional BBC *Panorama* interview with Martin Bashir in which she also admitted adultery and informed the public of her opinion that Prince Charles would never be king.

The Queen, convinced that for the sake of the monarchy and the couple's children – the two princes, William and Harry – the war must be brought to an end, wrote to each party ordering them to divorce. The separation was duly finalised in August 1996. Under the terms of the divorce, Diana was stripped of her HRH title, a decision for which the Queen was heavily criticised, although in fact this solution had originally been offered by Diana herself. The situation was further complicated by the announcement that, despite the loss of her title, the princess would continue to be regarded as a member of the royal family. It was noted, however, that her name was dropped from the

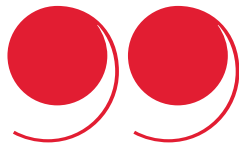
traditional church prayers for the family. Just over a year later, on 31 August 1997, Diana, Princess of Wales, was killed in a Paris car crash with her lover, Dodi Fayed, after being pursued by a pack of paparazzi on mopeds.

The impact of her death on the British monarchy was even more revolutionary than her life had been. For a moment, it seemed to observers that the dynasty was tottering. The tragedy channelled a current of hostility towards the royals, who members of the public and press corps regarded as culpable for their rejection of her. The Queen, characteristically cautious and reluctant to depart from tradition, was pressed by advisers and Blair's Labour government into overt gestures, including a broadcast acknowledging Diana's contribution and example.

The late princess's brand of royal behaviour, her glamorous yet caring image, her habit of reaching out to the people over the heads of officialdom, set a new standard for the popular concept of the monarchy that her sons would soon follow. Since her tragic death, Buckingham Palace has worked hard to modernise itself and reduce its cost to the public. The Queen has subsequently come to be seen as less aloof and more approachable, her activities now more likely to take in a visit to a pub or tea with a family in public housing. After the recent troubles her family had undergone, the unexpectedly warm reaction from the public to the Queen's golden jubilee in 2002 reaffirmed the real love and respect in which she was held.



The late princess's brand of royal behaviour, her glamorous yet caring image, her habit of reaching out to the people over the heads of officialdom, set a new standard for the popular concept of the monarchy that her sons would soon follow



But Diana's memory continued to haunt the monarchy. In November 2002, the prosecution of her former butler, Paul Burrell, for theft of her possessions was sensationally abandoned when the Queen told the Prince of Wales that she remembered a conversation she had had with Burrell (formerly one of her footmen) in which he had told her he was keeping Diana material in order to preserve it. The case had engendered much bad publicity, principally aimed at the Prince of Wales himself.

Meanwhile, the "Camilla Question" over his long-standing relationship with aristocrat Camilla Parker Bowles continued to agitate the public. The Queen, who had studiously refrained from taking sides during her son's earlier marriage troubles, was cautious in her public acceptance of Parker Bowles even after she moved into Clarence House, the home of the Prince of Wales since the death of his grandmother, the Queen Mother. In April 2005, when the prince finally married Parker Bowles in a registry office ceremony at Windsor Guildhall, the Queen, mindful of her position as supreme governor of the Church of England, did not attend. She was present at the subsequent service of blessing in St George's Chapel and hosted a reception for the couple at Windsor Castle, at which she indicated her joy that the prince was finally "home and dry".



With Canadian PM Justin Trudeau and Theresa May on the 75th anniversary of the D-Day landings in 2019 (PA)

Public interest in the royals thereafter fell on Charles and Diana's sons, princes William and Harry, raised under the watchful eye of their grandmother. William, the Duke of Cambridge, attended Eton College and the University of St Andrews in Scotland, where he met the fellow student who would become his wife, Kate Middleton. The prince, second in line to the throne, then trained at Sandhurst, served with the Blues and Royals, graduated from RAF Cranwell in 2008 and flew as a pilot with RAF Search and Rescue Force thereafter.

He married Middleton on 29 April 2011 at Westminster Abbey, the site of his grandmother's own marriage to Prince Philip and her coronation in 1953, an occasion of considerable public excitement. The Cambridges have since had three children: Prince George, Princess Charlotte and Prince Louis. Charlotte, in particular, is the spitting image of her famed great-grandmother.

William's brother, Prince Harry, led a similar early life to the sibling with whom he shared a profound grief for their mother, likewise attending Eton and Sandhurst and joining the Blues and Royals, serving in Afghanistan's dangerous Helmand province between 2007 and 2008 and returning for a second 20-week deployment four years later. Like William, Harry is the patron of a number of charitable organisations and is known for launching

the Invictus Games in 2014. He too married in a lavish traditional ceremony – this time at Windsor, like Charles, on 19 May 2018 – but his bride, the American actor Meghan Markle, suffered a torrid time at the hands of Britain’s tabloid press, especially compared with the reliably adoring coverage meted out to her sister-in-law, the Duchess of Cambridge.



Young royals at Buckingham Palace in July 2018 (Getty)

Subjected to the same intense interest as Harry’s mother had been in the 1980s, the new Duchess of Sussex was clearly uncomfortable with the formal duties of her role – despite friendly overtures from the Queen herself, who was once filmed lending her granddaughter-in-law a blanket on a public outing together in Cheshire. The couple duly announced in January 2020 that they would be stepping away from the royal family and relocating to California to live as private citizens.

The decision saw Markle labelled a second Mrs Simpson and was mockingly referred to as “Megxit” in the press but provoked serious questions about the future of a dynasty the Queen had spearheaded for so long (at a time when the sympathetic Netflix drama *The Crown* was doing much to remind the public of her decades of service and self-sacrifice). Harry himself threatened to widen the rift by making negative comments about the Commonwealth’s “uncomfortable” past during a July 2020 discussion with youth leaders about the Black Lives Matter movement, causing upset to his grandmother who never lost

faith in the value of that organisation as a force for international unity and considered it her life's work to have upheld the alliance of nations after decolonisation.

The situation further intensified when Harry and Meghan gave an extensive televised interview to the American broadcaster Oprah Winfrey on 7 March 2021 in which they made a series of allegations about cruelty and intolerance among the Windsors, including that the duchess had been denied access to mental health support and subjected to racist remarks concerning her infant son Archie. This too had uncomfortable echoes of Diana's infamous *Panorama* interview a generation earlier.

The death of the Queen's husband, Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, at the age of 99 struck on 9 April 2021 and deprived Her Majesty of a companion who had stood by her loyally over an extraordinary 74 years of marriage. The Queen's consort was known for his often off-colour public remarks but rightly celebrated as a singular and lively individual keenly committed to the issues he cared about, not least his beloved wife. Without his devotion and good humour behind the scenes, it is questionable whether she could have led the country as formidably as she did – the Queen rarely, if ever, cancelled a public appearance or succumbed to illness and demonstrated her skill during the coronavirus pandemic when, at 94, she gave a televised address to reassure the public and call for a spirit of togetherness. It was only very belatedly that signs of frailty emerged in the use of a walking stick at two back-to-back public engagements and an unusual overnight stay in hospital, which forced her to pull out of a trip to Northern Ireland. Prince Charles standing in for her at the State Opening of Parliament in May 2022 gave the public its first glimpse of a future without her at the helm.



With her family on Buckingham Palace balcony for her platinum jubilee in June (Getty)

She rallied, however, to enjoy the four days of festivities organised to celebrate her platinum jubilee in June 2022, surprising everyone by appearing in a short film alongside a CGI Paddington Bear in which the pair took tea together at Buckingham Palace and Her Majesty finally revealed what had been concealed inside her trusty black handbag for all these years: an emergency marmalade sandwich. The skit recalled her earlier screen appearance alongside Daniel Craig's James Bond, filmed for the opening ceremony of the London Olympic Games in 2012, and showcased her wry sense of humour to the fullest. The pageantry concluded with a lavish pop concert at the palace featuring a spectacular drone cloud display in the sky overhead and performances by Queen (appropriately), Andrea Bocelli, Alicia Keys, Elton John and Diana Ross, among many others.

Queen Elizabeth II was the last of the family group that her father had affectionately termed "Us Four". On 8 May 1995, she had been joined by her mother and sister to lead the celebrations marking the 50th anniversary of VE Day from the balcony of Buckingham Palace, representing the war generation and standing on the same spot from which the family had assembled to cheer the defeat of Nazi Germany half a century before.

The deaths of the Queen Mother and Princess Margaret in 2002 left Her Majesty as the last surviving member of that quartet. Her quiet self-possession in the face of crisis, her dignity,

patriotism, strong sense of duty and utter dedication to what she saw as her job, have earned her a place as one of the great monarchs of her line, worthy of comparison with her role model, her great-great-grandmother, Queen Victoria.

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The rock on which modern Britain was built, says Truss



Liz Truss in Downing Street yesterday as she pays tribute to a monarch who ‘touched the lives of millions around the world’ (PA)

**ADAM FORREST
KATE DEVLIN**

Queen Elizabeth II was the “rock” on which modern Britain was built, Liz Truss has said, as she marked “the passing of the second Elizabethan age”. Speaking outside 10 Downing Street

yesterday evening, the new Conservative prime minister said the Queen had been “a personal inspiration to me and to many Britons”.

She said: “Queen Elizabeth II was the rock on which modern Britain was built. Our country has grown and flourished under her reign. Britain is the great country it is today because of her.” Ms Truss added: “It’s an extraordinary achievement to have presided with such dignity and grace for 70 years,” noting that the monarch had “touched the lives of millions around the world”.

The prime minister concluded her address by saying “God save the King” – confirming that the new monarch will be known as King Charles III. “We offer him our loyalty and devotion,” she said. “And with the passing of the second Elizabethan age, we usher in a new era in the magnificent history of our great country, exactly as Her Majesty would have wished, by saying the words, ‘God save the King.’”

Party leaders, former prime ministers and heads of state joined Ms Truss in paying tribute to the Queen. Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer said the nation mourned the passing of our “greatest ever monarch”.

Outgoing prime minister Boris Johnson said it was the country’s “saddest day” and that the Queen had possessed a “unique and simple power to make us happy”. He added: “That is why we loved her. That is why we grieve for Elizabeth the Great, the longest-serving, and in many ways the finest, monarch in our history.”

Sir John Major, the former Tory PM, said of the Queen that she was “selfless and wise” and had a “wonderful generosity of spirit”, adding: “For we have all lost someone very precious to us and, as we mourn, we should be grateful that we were blessed with such an example of duty and leadership for so very many years.”

Sir Tony Blair said Britain had lost “the matriarch of our nation, the figure who more than any other brought our country together, kept us in touch with our better nature, personified

everything which makes us proud to be British”. Gordon Brown, the former Labour PM, said that the Queen had “served this country to the last” and that the “entire world” was in mourning. Theresa May, another of Ms Truss’s predecessors at No 10, said she had been “our constant throughout this entire Elizabethan era”.

David Cameron, former Tory PM, said the late monarch had been “a rock of strength for our nation and the Commonwealth ... There can simply be no finer example of dignified public duty and unstinting service.” Scotland’s first minister Nicola Sturgeon said the Queen’s death was a “profoundly sad moment”, hailing her “life of extraordinary dedication and service”. Wales’s first minister Mark Drakeford said the Queen’s death was “an immense loss” and spoke of her “long and exceptional life”.

Commons speaker Sir Lindsay Hoyle said the Queen’s death was a “terrible loss for us all”, adding: “We will miss her beyond measure.” Liberal Democrat leader Sir Ed Davey said the Queen represented “duty and courage, as well as warmth and compassion”. Irish prime minister Micheal Martin conveyed his deepest sympathy to the British people, stating: “Our world is a poorer place for her passing, but a far richer and better place as a result of her long life and enduring contribution.”

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Leaders past and present mourn ‘irreparable loss’



The Queen and Barack Obama at a 2011 Buckingham Palace state banquet (AFP/Getty)

DAVID HARDING

Tributes began pouring in from around the world after it was announced that Queen Elizabeth II had died.

The monarch spent more than seven decades on the throne, overseeing a time of great transformation for Britain at home and a reign that saw the end of its global empire abroad after the Second World War.

At the time of her death she was the head of the Commonwealth, which consists of 56 countries and more than 2 billion people. She was also the head of state in 15 countries, including Australia and Canada.

During her reign she became the most travelled British monarch in history and in the year of her coronation, she and her husband Prince Philip embarked on a seven-month round-the-world tour, visiting 13 countries. Among her many trips were ground-breaking state visits to China, Russia and Ireland. She visited or was visited by five popes.

Liz Truss, who became Britain's new prime minister after meeting the Queen on Tuesday, said the monarch had "touched the lives of millions around the world".

Joe Biden, US president, said her "legacy will loom large in the pages of British history and in the story of our world".

He added that "Queen Elizabeth II was a stateswoman of unmatched dignity and constancy" who "helped make our relationship special".



We are awed by her legacy of tireless, dignified public service. Our thoughts are with her family and the people of the United Kingdom at this difficult time

Former US president Barack Obama



Queen Elizabeth came to the throne when Dwight Eisenhower was president and lived during the tenure of 13 US presidents.

A White House press briefing was cancelled after the death of the Queen was announced.

Former US president Barack Obama tweeted: “Like so many of you, Michelle and I are grateful to have witnessed Her Majesty’s dedicated leadership, and we are awed by her legacy of tireless, dignified public service. Our thoughts are with her family and the people of the United Kingdom at this difficult time.”

Donald Trump called it “a sad day”.

Russian President Vladimir Putin extended his condolences to Britain for the “irreparable loss” of Queen Elizabeth.

In a message to King Charles, Putin said the Queen “rightfully enjoyed the love and respect of her subjects, as well as authority on the world stage”.

He added: “I wish you courage and resilience in the face of this difficult, irreparable loss. May I ask you to pass on sincere condolences and support to members of the royal family and the entire people of Great Britain.”

Canadian prime minister Justin Trudeau called her “one of my favourite people in the world, and I will miss her so”.



The Queen and Canada’s PM Justin Trudeau in March (AP)

Canada’s governor general Mary Simon said the country offered its “deepest condolences to the royal family on the passing of

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II”.

“Canadians across the country will mourn the loss of the Queen. Let us take a moment to honour Her Majesty’s memory in each of our own ways,” she wrote on Twitter.

Ireland’s prime minister Micheal Martin said his country conveyed the “deepest sympathy to the British people on the loss”, and highlighted her groundbreaking visit to Ireland in 2011 as marking a turning point in both countries’ relations.

The Northern Irish leader of the Irish nationalist party Sinn Fein offered her sincere condolences to the family of the Queen, whom she said made a significant contribution to advancing peace and reconciliation between the two islands and also acknowledged “the profound sorrow” within Northern Ireland’s pro-British unionist community.



Elizabeth II and Bill Clinton toast following the Queen’s speech at the Guildhall dinner in Portsmouth in 1994 (Reuters)

“Personally, I am grateful for Queen Elizabeth’s significant contribution and determined efforts to advancing peace and reconciliation between our two islands,” she said.

French president Emmanuel Macron tweeted: “Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II embodied the British nation’s continuity and unity for over 70 years. I remember her as a friend of France, a

kind-hearted queen who has left a lasting impression on her country and her century.”

He also announced that flags in the country would fly at half-mast.

The mayor of Paris, Anne Hidalgo, announced that the lights of the Eiffel Tower would be turned off to mourn her passing.

Ukraine president Volodymyr Zelensky tweeted: “It is with deep sadness that we learned of the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. On behalf of the people, we extend sincere condolences to the Royal Family, the entire United Kingdom and the Commonwealth over this irreparable loss.”

Australia’s republican PM Anthony Albanese offered his condolences and praised the Queen’s “timeless decency”, before adding that her death marks the “end of an era”.

Spain’s King Felipe said: “We will miss her dearly.”

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‘I thought she’d just live forever’: Thousands mourn the Queen in London



The heavy rain did not deter crowds who gathered outside Buckingham Palace last night (Reuters)

COLIN DRURY

BUCKINGHAM PALACE

They came in their thousands, in the rain and the dark. United by grief, they stood, sobbed and sang.

Mourners braved downpours to gather outside Buckingham Palace through the night and pay their respects to the Queen after she died at Balmoral yesterday.

They clutched umbrellas and flowers, candles and each other's hands. They spoke in hushed tones. They did not hide their tears or their shock.

"I just thought she'd live forever," said one, hairdresser James O'Neill. "She's been there throughout my entire life and I sort of thought she always would be. And for her to be gone – so suddenly – it doesn't feel real. How can the Queen not be here?"

It was a much-repeated theme. For many here, this was not just the passing of a much-loved monarch, it was also the passing of a life-long constant. It was the end of the only era they had – up to now – ever known.

"Whatever else was going on – the war, the pandemic, the cost of living – you knew the Queen was there," said 32-year-old O'Neill. "You knew she would keep everything stable. And, without her, I think it does feel like the world has got a little less certain."

He and colleague Julie Harper, 37, had come straight from work when they heard the news and had spent a couple of hours milling with the crowds.

"We just wanted to pay our respects and be here," she said. "I was here for the [platinum] jubilee and I remember I cried in the cab home because I was so happy I'd seen it. Well, tonight, I'm going to be crying for different reasons, aren't I?"



James O'Neill and Julie Harper came from work to pay their respects to the Queen (The Independent)

A sense of astonishment at the death was palpable, even as the evening went on.

That the Queen was 96 and known to be having health issues had not blunted the sudden shock of the news.

“Two days ago she was appointing a new prime minister,” said Felicity Thomas. “There was no just no warning of what was coming. And I know she’s 96 but her mother lived until she was 101. Her husband was 99. She has the best medical care available. I honestly thought there might be a 75th jubilee in her. And then to see the news today ... it’s devastating.”

She and colleagues had been having an after-work drink when the news broke. They supped up, went to Sainsbury’s, bought some flowers and came down. “It was all we were talking about anyway,” said 39-year-old Thomas. “So we thought we might as well come and talk about it here.”

Among the mourners – who towards the end of the night broke into occasional bursts of the national anthem – were young and old, from Britain and beyond.

American BreeLayne Carter – who has lived in the UK for almost three years – had come to the palace because the Queen, she said, had been a “major reason” why she had grown up wanting to move to London.

“I just thought – I still think – she was the epitome of poise and grace and what a strong independent woman should be,” the 30-year-old actor said. “She was the most amazing role model you could wish for as a young person. She was inspirational. Everything she did – in often really difficult circumstance – had class.”



American expats BreeLayne Carter and Sara Burke laid flowers for the Queen (The Independent)

Carter welled up as she spoke. At least, she said, it had been a peaceful end to a good life, at a home she loved with her family by her side. Her friend – and fellow American expat Sara Burke – nodded at this. “There’s some comfort in that,” the 44-year-old accountant added.

For Gina Markham, meanwhile, the moment was so significant that when her young daughter said the family should come to Buckingham Palace to mark it, that’s just what they did.

The five of them – mum Gina, dad Ricky and kids Georgie, Sonny and Dolcie – spent an hour paying their respect. “She served for 70 years and, pretty much, she never put a foot wrong,” said 42-year-old Gina, a school worker. “How many people could do that? She deserves all the tributes she gets over the coming days and more.”

It would, she said, take some time to now get used to hearing the phrase ‘His Majesty the King’.

“If he [Charles] can do half as good a job as his mother, he’ll be a great king,” she said. “Let’s hope he does her proud.”

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A life in pictures



The Queen greets people in Portsmouth during her silver jubilee tour 1977 (PA)

LAURA HAMPSON

Queen Elizabeth II has died, aged 96. Her Majesty's death follows the death of her husband, Prince Philip, who passed away 9 April 2021 aged 99.

The Queen, who leaves behind four children, eight grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren, was Britain's longest-reigning monarch having held the throne since 6 February 1952. She was officially crowned on 2 June 1953. She was just 25 when

her father, King George VI, passed away. In 2022, the monarch celebrated her Platinum Jubilee, marking 70 years on the throne.

The Queen was third in the line of succession when she was born on 21 April 1926. Her uncle, Edward VIII, ascended the throne when George V died in 1936, but his abdication later that same year led to Elizabeth II's father George VI taking over his brother's position as king. Edward VIII was the first monarch to voluntarily abdicate, after the Church of England refused to condone his marriage to American divorcée Wallis Warfield Simpson. In order to marry one another, the couple had a civil ceremony, which was at odds with his position as head of the Church of England.

The abdication put 10-year-old Elizabeth in the position of heir to the throne and her sister, Margaret, who was six at the time, as the second in the line of succession. Before she became Queen, Elizabeth II married Prince Philip whom she had first met in 1934 when she was just eight and he was 13 at the wedding of Princess Marina of Greece and Denmark and Prince George, Duke of Kent. The pair met again in the summer of 1939, when she was 13 and he was 18.

The couple announced their engagement on 9 July 1947 and were married four months later on 20 November at Westminster Abbey – the same place George VI and Elizabeth were married in 1923 and, later, where the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge got married in 2011. The Queen and Prince Philip welcomed their first child, Prince Charles in 1948. Anne, Princess Royal was born in 1950 followed by Prince Andrew in 1960 and Prince Edward in 1964.

During her seven-decade reign, the Queen worked with 15 prime ministers – Winston Churchill being the first and Liz Truss being the last. She was dedicated to her diplomatic duties, attending some of the 2,000 events the royal family complete each year and embarking on some 200 royal tours to Commonwealth nations.



The nine-year-old Elizabeth attends an aristocratic wedding in 1936 with her mother and younger sister (Getty)



The coronation of King George VI in 1937. Elizabeth, aged 10, became the heir apparent to the throne (Getty)



With her sister Margaret, addressing children who have been evacuated in 1940 (Getty)



Elizabeth and Phillip in Westminster Abbey on their wedding day, 1947 (PA)



Queen Elizabeth II at her coronation in 1953



PM Winston Churchill greets Her Majesty as she leaves No 10 on 4 April 1955 (AFP/Getty)



With Princess Anne in 1960 (Getty)



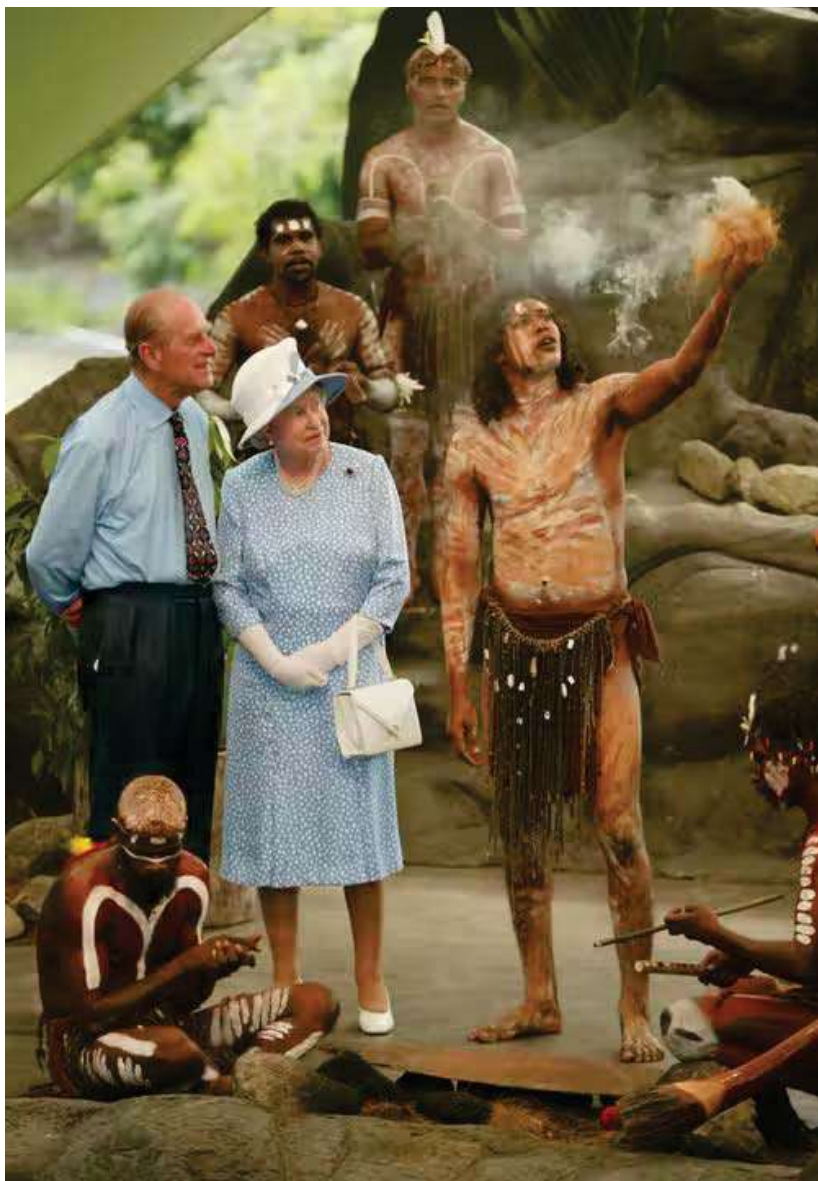
The Queen in Muscat during a visit to Oman in 1979 (PA)



Diana, Princess of Wales and the Queen smile to well-wishers outside Clarence House in London in 1987 (AP)



The Queen visits RAF Marham in January 2002, on the first public engagement of her jubilee year (AFP/Getty)



Elizabeth II and Philip watch Tjapukai Aborigines light a ceremonial fire near Cairns, Australia on the final leg of her

golden jubilee tour (AFP/Getty)



The Royal Couple at Broadlands, Hampshire, in 2007
(AFP/Getty)



Elizabeth plants a tree at Newmarket Animal Health Trust
(Getty)



Decked out with a pair of 3D glasses studded with Swarovski crystal in 2012 (AFP/Getty)



With Prince Charles at the end of her diamond jubilee concert in front of Buckingham Palace in 2012 (AFP/Getty)



A visit to the Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red evolving art installation at the Tower of London in 2014 (Getty)



The royal family stand on the balcony of Buckingham Palace to see the fly-past during the Queen's birthday parade (AFP)



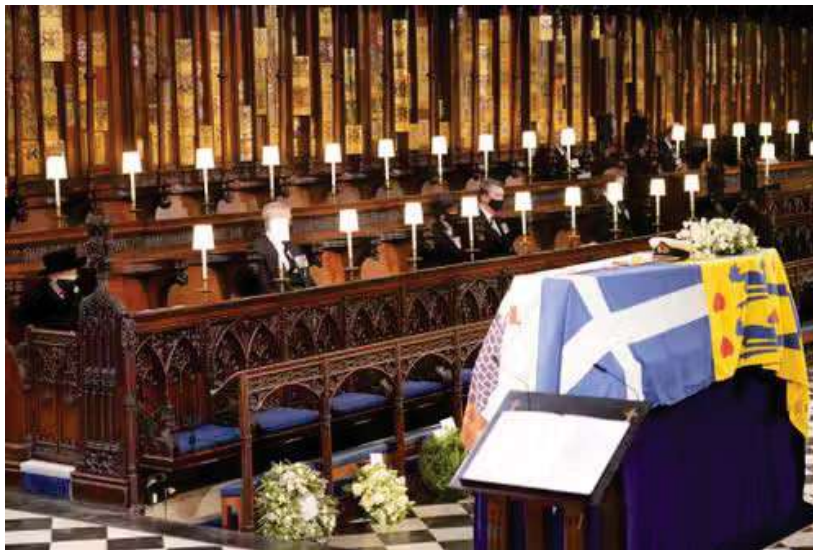
Queen Elizabeth greets well-wishers during a 'walkabout' on her 90th birthday in Windsor in 2016 (AFP/Getty)



Members of the royal family during Trooping of the Colour in 2017 (AFP/Getty)



The Duke and Duchess of Sussex are joined by the Queen to introduce Archie Harrison Mountbatten-Windsor (PA)



The Queen looks at the coffin of Britain's Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh during his funeral service at St George's Chapel in Windsor Castle on 17 April (AFP/Getty)

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The world is in mourning



Despite the Queen's failing health, we still expected her to be around forever (AFP/Getty)

SEAN O'GRADY

The news finally came yesterday: "London Bridge is Down." The message that reverberated around Westminster and Whitehall – and filtered into the Commons during the debate on the energy crisis – wasn't quite the worst, but it was grim enough. The end was not far away, and with it the coded message decided on some decades ago to alert the authorities to the imminent end of the reign. Later we knew, as the royal family dashed to Balmoral, that the terribly sad news was true.

Even so, the Queen ruled to the last – and as her health must have been failing, made sure that she was still in a position to accept the resignation of Boris Johnson and invite Liz Truss to form a government in her name. She also discussed with the new British leader the state of the nation, as she did with Winston Churchill in 1952 and with every one of her other prime ministers.

It's striking to reflect that, when Churchill resigned and held a dinner for the Queen at 10 Downing Street in 1955, he proposed a toast to her and reminded those present that he had also toasted the life of her great-great-grandmother, Queen Victoria, when he was the subaltern at the Battle of Omdurman in 1898. Churchill, by the way, was born in 1874, and the Queen's last prime minister, Ms Truss, was born in 1975. The life of Elizabeth II spanned a considerable time period.

Not unexpected, therefore, but still a shock, given that the Queen, like her mother and her late husband, had enjoyed relatively robust health well into extreme old age.

And although the vaguely described “mobility issues” and her increasing frailty meant that she hadn't been out in public since 16 July, we still expected her, irrationally, to be around for ever. There were intimations of mortality, but we didn't dwell on them. She had survived Covid, after all, not to mention various minor ailments over many decades; she seemed indestructible, if not immortal.

Her motto was always “I must be seen to be believed,” and no monarch in British history, or perhaps globally, had travelled more, or been filmed and photographed more frequently. On the stamps, the banknotes, E II R on the pillar boxes and the coppers' helmets, on television and at big state occasions – hers has been a ubiquitous presence. It's quite tough to think that her 2021 Christmas broadcast was her last.

During all the bitter social divisions – through terrorism, political threats to the union, family joys and traumas, good times and bad – the Queen has been a symbol of unity and continuity. Lately, she has rarely been glimpsed even taking part

in Zoom calls, or in still photographs, such as the one taken when she received Ms Truss at Balmoral.

Her dedication to duty, performed to the limits of her physical ability, was demonstrated once again. But despite her fading from the scene, knowing she was there, in place and still going, was comforting enough. She was still “believed”.



People take a moment in front of an image of the Queen in Piccadilly Circus last night (AFP/Getty)

Elizabeth II was the exemplar of a constitutional monarch, rarely committing a faux pas, and scrupulously following the advice of all her premiers, in the UK and the Commonwealth (wise or otherwise). As a representative of the nation at home and abroad, and with the prestige built up over decades of service, she was an irreplaceable asset to the nation.

She was not just diplomat-in-chief, incomparable international asset and head of state, but also informally “head of the nation”. That is whence the sense of loss derives. It’s ridiculous, of course, because very few people have met the Queen, and still fewer could be said to have known her, but somehow, many people felt an almost spiritual or personal connection with her, though she was, strictly speaking, a stranger. Not everyone in public life is able to engender that kind of response, and certainly not to maintain it for 70 years.

She was a symbol of the nation, and latterly the nation’s “granny”, and obviously much loved. Even ardent republicans

concede her record of public service, and her private and public morality. Whatever else was going wrong around her, she was incorruptible. She always tried to embody the nation's values, and moreover, the Christian values of tolerance and understanding. She succeeded. Rather subtly, by word and deed, she made the case for a multicultural nation and Commonwealth.

Here is just one example, from her 2004 Christmas message – at a time, then as now, of anxiety about migration. Drawing on the New Testament story of the good Samaritan, she said:

“Everyone is our neighbour, no matter what race, creed or colour. The need to look after a fellow human being is far more important than any cultural or religious differences.

“There is certainly much more to be done and many challenges to be overcome. Discrimination still exists. Some people feel that their own beliefs are being threatened. Some are unhappy about unfamiliar cultures. They all need to be reassured that there is so much to be gained by reaching out to others; that diversity is indeed a strength and not a threat.”

There may be tears. Of mourning, yes, but also from those who are filled with trepidation about the future. Constitutionally and politically, it's unjustified, as there should be no great change. The “transition” to her son is seamless and automatic.

We will get used to the new King, just as the nation became accustomed to the young Queen after her father passed away at the relatively young age of 56. He'd been in poor health, and the nation went into a profound period of mourning for George VI, who had seen us through the war. King Charles and Camilla, Queen Consort, should also attract the same loyalty – but Elizabeth II and Prince Philip were always going to be a hard act to follow.

This is “a moment” – you'll always remember where you were when you heard the news. It is a pause, a time to take stock, and to consider the future without the familiar figure that the nation has grown so fond of, so respected and been so proud of. We will miss that smile. Somehow, the nation feels diminished.

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Britain's one constant in an age of upheaval is no more



The gates of Buckingham Palace yesterday after the Queen's death was announced (AFP/Getty)

TOM PECK

When the flag above Buckingham Palace made its way to half mast, the passing tourists decided to stick around to witness a moment of history. There wasn't anything *to* actually witness, but nevertheless, they were there – and that counts for something. The royal easel is only put in place for the glad tidings, not the sad ones – births and marriages, not deaths. The

news emerged in the now customary way, via smartphones, and made its breathless way around the gathering crowds. A few solitary voices shouted “God Save the King!”.

They watched as the prime minister strode up to the Downing Street lectern for the second time in as many days. PM Liz is only on the third day of her reign. She’s already done more than some of the Queen’s 14 other prime ministers. “Queen Elizabeth II was the rock on which modern Britain was built,” she said. And she was right to do so. That general sense of an earthquake going on underneath the country’s feet is nothing to do with her having just lifted the ban on fracking. At least not yet.

The first sense that something was awry had come in the House of Commons, six hours before. Ms Truss was in the middle of the defining moment of her premiership when another one came along. The trifling matter of a £150bn intervention to pay everyone’s gas bill for two full years was forgotten within about five minutes of its being announced, when Nadhim Zahawi started passing around a note that instantly drained the blood from the faces of all who were shown it.

There was another note doing the rounds on the Labour benches, and within seconds, Keir Starmer and Angela Rayner had scarpered from the chamber in the middle of quite possibly the single most important moment of either of their careers. We still don’t know exactly what the note said, but we do know that within minutes, Buckingham Palace was doing what it never does and issuing a grave statement on the health of Her Majesty. She was, it said, “under medical supervision”. The need to issue a statement saying absolutely nothing of course says absolutely everything.

For the second time in two days, websites for aviation geeks strained under the weight of people tracking the journeys of small private jets from London to Aberdeen. The one whose flight they followed was carrying not the 14th or 15th prime minister of the Queen’s 70-year reign, but seven close members of Her Majesty’s family, who would land and then pile into Land Rovers, one driven by Prince William, and make their way to Balmoral – all of them, too, wearing the same ashen-faced look.

Well, similar, but not the same. The pictures of William behind the wheel of the car are not those of a man taken aback by the enormity of events, but rather by the enormity of private grief.

Twenty one years ago, Her Majesty the Queen sent a note to be read out at a church service for British victims of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. It simply said: "Grief is the price we pay for love." These are the only words I can ever recall hearing that are of any actual comfort to the grieving. Most sentiments that arrive in cards at such times are of no use at all. That short sentence is as beautiful as it is profound.

Of course, a nation doesn't really grieve for a passing monarch of 96 years of age in the way that her loved ones do, but her death is a profound jolt to the senses. It will take a very long time for it to stop sounding strange when the newsreaders tell us what "the King" has been up to. It will not be long before the cashpoint whirrs and a different face comes sputtering out. That's never happened before.

National sentiment has changed a lot in 70 years. Deference is very passe, these days. But even among the most fervent republicans, the attitude towards Queen Elizabeth II had become admirably cloudy. What she was most certainly given by birthright, she also most certainly spent seven full decades doing her bit to earn. The immense respect the Queen elicited across the world had nothing to do with obliging deference; it was specifically for who she was.

And in that sense, she will be an impossible act to follow. This seemingly unending age of upheaval has lost its last vestige of continuity.

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I glimpsed the remarkable woman behind the crown



The Queen with former BBC royal correspondent Jennie Bond and TV presenter Denis Norden at a reception for the broadcasting industry in Buckingham Palace, 2001 (PA)

JENNIE BOND

It was the Queen's televised address in the middle of the pandemic that said it all for me. Locked in our homes, frightened of the seemingly deadly virus sweeping through the world, we heard her reassuring words: "Better days will return: we will be with our friends again; we will be with our families again; we will meet again."

It typified the quiet, calm lead she gave for seven decades. For almost all of us, the Queen was simply there, in the background of our national life. Most of us probably didn't trouble to think about her very often. But her enduring presence provided a stability and continuity more important than any of us might have recognised.

For me of course, the Queen was a central part of my life. I reported on her and the royal family for more than 30 years. I travelled the world with her and saw how consummately she flew the flag for the United Kingdom. She was this country's finest ambassador.

Some tours were truly historic: her visit to Ireland in 2011 was one of the most delicate and sensitive. A few were undoubtedly tiring and tedious; I remember the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh being almost frozen during a never-ending cultural display in Winnipeg, Canada; I watched anxiously as she continued her walkabout in Sydney despite monsoon rains and slippery pavements. But she never stopped smiling, waving and playing the role that became her destiny on the day her uncle, Edward VIII chose to abdicate.



I travelled the world with her and saw how she flew the flag for the United Kingdom – she was this country's finest ambassador



One of the most memorable was her visit to South Africa in 1995. I was one of a group of journalists who were invited aboard the royal yacht, *Britannia*, to chat with the Queen at the start of

that tour. Never had I seen her so animated, so excited and so enthusiastic about a visit. She said she had wanted to return to South Africa for nearly 50 years – her only other trip there had been with her parents and sister in 1947.

And her return visit was a resounding success; she forged a real friendship with Nelson Mandela and he became one of the very few people who would henceforth call her “Elizabeth” while she called him “Nelson”.

I cannot think of another head of state who achieved the same level of global recognition as the Queen. She is recognised and widely admired the world over. Her family has all too frequently sabotaged the reputation of the monarchy with their divorces and domestic dramas, but her own reputation has remained unsullied.

Meeting the Queen, as I did many times over the years, allowed me to glimpse the woman behind the crown. Her sense of humour always simmered just below the surface and her smile was far more dazzling in real life. I always tried to tap into her humour by telling her a story or anecdote. Some made her laugh; some produced an icy stare!

Probably her greatest achievement was to have remained an enigma to most of us for the 70 years of her reign. We really didn't know her views on anything remotely controversial. As such, she was a unifying force in an often divided nation, and a figurehead and comforting voice when times were tough.

Fennie Bond worked for 14 years as the BBC's royal correspondent

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Royal change – the Queen’s death heralds new coins, stamps and even barristers



The Queen’s visage has been a constant symbol for 70 years (Getty)

SAMAN JAVED

With the death of Queen Elizabeth II, many iconic goods, symbols and titles will have to change.

Coins, stamps and medals will no longer bear the Queen's distinctive side profile, but that of her son and heir King Charles III.

A new flag and coat of arms will be designed for the new monarch and the most famous anthem of all will, of course, have to be tweaked.

Even senior barristers – known as Queen's Counsel (QC) for 70 years – will have to adapt to the new moniker of King's Counsel (KC).

Here is a breakdown of some of the iconic changes that will happen.

Historically, coins played a significant role in spreading the fame of kings because, for many people, the image of the king on coins was the only likeness of the monarch they were likely to see in their lifetimes.

During Queen Elizabeth II's reign there were five representations of the monarch on coins in circulation.

The original coin portrait of the Queen was by Mary Gillick and was adopted at the beginning of her reign in 1952.



Final portrait: Jody Clark with his engraving of the Queen in 2015 (Getty)

She was later photographed by Arnold Machin OBE, and an approved portrait entered circulation in 1968.

A third portrait, by Raphael Makloutf was adopted in 1985, followed by a portrait by Ian Rank-Broadly in 1998.

The final portrait was introduced in 2015 and was created by Jody Clark. It shows the Queen wearing the diamond diadem, as she did when travelling to the state opening of parliament.

But what will happen to stamps, coins and notes when Charles becomes king? Here's what we know.

Will stamps, coins and notes change?



The Queen with the then Prince of Wales at the Reddendo Parade at the Palace of Holyroodhouse, Edinburgh in June (Getty)

Following in his mother's footsteps, it is believed Charles will sit for a new portrait to be used on all new coins, notes and stamps that enter circulation after he takes the throne.

Coins bearing the portrait of the Queen will likely continue to be issued in the immediate future, and all currency bearing her portrait will still be valid for use.

The switch to new currency and stamps will be a gradual process, with banks and post offices gradually collecting the old designs.

It is likely that many people will be keen to hold onto their coins as a keepsake of the Queen.

What will the new coins look like?

Since the 1600s, during the reign of Charles II, royal tradition has dictated that monarchs should be represented on coins

facing in the opposite direction to their predecessor.

This means that when Charles becomes king, his portrait will face left, as the Queen's faced towards the right.



Royal symbol: The Queen's profile will slowly be taken out of circulation (AP)

What about barristers?

In the UK, Queen's Counsel (QC) refers to a set of barristers and solicitors who the monarch appoints to be a part of Her Majesty's Counsel learned in the law.

The title switches to King's Counsel (KC) now a king reigns.

Stationery and business cards may need to be reprinted to reflect the change in the post-nominal letters.

What will change for King Charles III himself?

Charles's signature will change. Before it was simply "Charles". Now it will be the name he has taken as king with an additional R for Rex – Latin for king – at the end.

In criminal court cases, the R to denote the Crown now stands for Rex rather than Regina (queen).



Elizabeth R: The Queen's signature will be replaced by King Charles III's (PA/Royal Mint)

Flags

Charles will need a new personal flag as King.

In 1960, the Queen adopted a personal flag – a gold E with the royal crown surrounded by a chaplet of roses on a blue background – to be flown on any building, ship, car or aircraft in which she was staying or travelling.

It was often used when she visited Commonwealth countries.

While the royal standard represents the sovereign and the United Kingdom, the Queen's own flag was personal to her alone and could be flown by no one other than the Queen

Coat of arms

The royal coat of arms, adopted at the start of Queen Victoria's reign in 1837, will remain the same.

But just as when the Queen became monarch, it is likely that new artwork will be issued early in Charles's reign by the College of Arms for use by public service bodies such as the civil service and the armed forces.

The "very light rebranding" will be hard to spot, but it signifies the opportunity to replace old images, which have been in use

for many decades, with newer, differently stylised ones.

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News/ Elizabeth II, 1926-2022



A timeline of a royal life

From joining the army at 18 and secretly getting engaged to Prince Philip to becoming our longest-reigning monarch



The Queen and Prince Philip in Dublin in 2011 (Oli Scarff/Getty)

**ELLIE ABRAHAM
LAURA HAMPSON**

Queen Elizabeth II died at Balmoral Castle on Thursday 8 September 2022 after reigning for 70 years.

As the monarch of the United Kingdom, and 15 Commonwealth realms, Queen Elizabeth lived a life of service after succeeding to the throne in 1952 at the age of 25, following the death of her father, King George VI.

Below, *The Independent* looks back on the life of the Queen, from being born into the royal family to becoming the longest reigning monarch in British history.

21 April 1926

Queen Elizabeth II is born via caesarean section at the Mayfair home of her mother's parents. She is named Princess Elizabeth Alexandra Mary and is the first child of the Duke and Duchess of York, who later became King George VI and Queen Elizabeth.

29 May 1926

Princess Elizabeth Alexandra Mary is christened in the private chapel of Buckingham Palace. She is named after her mother, with her two middle names representing her paternal great-grandmothers.



Elizabeth and younger sister Margaret in 1933 (AFP/Getty)

21 August 1930

The Princess's younger sister, Princess Margaret Rose, is born.

1933

When Elizabeth was seven years old, her father brought home her first corgi, Dookie.

Summer 1934

Elizabeth meets her future husband, Philip Mountbatten, for the first time at the wedding of one of his cousins.

1936

Elizabeth's younger years are spent between her family's townhouse in Piccadilly and their home in Richmond Park. In 1936, the family took the Royal Lodge in Windsor Great Park as their country home.

20 January 1936

Her grandfather, King George V, dies and her father's older brother Edward VIII ascends to the throne.

11 December 1936

After ruling for less than a year, King Edward VIII is the first British monarch to voluntarily abdicate the throne. Elizabeth's father, the Duke of York, becomes King George VI.



The coronation of King George VI in 1937; Elizabeth, aged 10, became the heir apparent to the throne (Getty)

July 1939

Elizabeth meets Philip again at a royal family visit at Dartmouth. Lord Mountbatten asks Philip to play her escort and they form a

romance.

21 April 1942

On her 16th birthday, the princess carries out her first official public royal engagement, inspecting soldiers of the Grenadier Guards.

1944

When Princess Elizabeth turns 18, she insists on joining the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS), the women's branch of the British Army, where she trains as a mechanic.



The official announcement of Princess Elizabeth and Philip Mountbatten's engagement in 1947 (Getty)

July 1946

The Princess and Philip become secretly engaged to be married, but the official announcement is not made until 9 July 1947.

20 November 1947

Elizabeth and Philip are married at a ceremony in Westminster Abbey. The king gives Philip the title the Duke of Edinburgh.

1947

Princess Elizabeth attends her first royal tour abroad and celebrates her 21st birthday in South Africa.

14 November 1948

At 22, Princess Elizabeth gives birth to the couple's first child, Prince Charles Philip Arthur George, at Buckingham Palace.



Left to right, Prince Charles, Prince Philip, Princess Anne and the Queen in 1950 (Getty)

1949 to 1951

Elizabeth lives in Malta where her husband, Prince Philip, was stationed as a Royal Navy officer. She divides her time between the island and London, where Prince Charles stays with his grandparents.

15 August 1950

The couple's second child, Princess Anne, is born at Clarence House.

6 February 1952

While in Kenya, Elizabeth is awoken by Prince Philip who informs her that her father King George VI has died at Sandringham. She ascends to the throne at the age of 25.

2 June 1953

At her coronation at Westminster Abbey, she is officially crowned Queen Elizabeth II.



Queen Elizabeth on her coronation day in 1953 (AFP/Getty)

19 February 1960

The couple's third child, Prince Andrew, is born at Buckingham Palace.

10 March 1964

Their fourth child, Prince Edward, is born at Buckingham Palace.

2 June 1977

The Queen celebrates her silver jubilee, marking 25 years on the throne.

21 April 1986

Her Majesty The Queen turns 60 years old.



The Queen walking her corgis in 1980 (Getty)

20 November 1992

A fire destroys part of the Queen's home at Windsor Castle, ripping through 115 rooms including nine state rooms.

5 September 1997

The Queen speaks to crowds gathered outside Buckingham Palace and views the coffin of Princess Diana at St James's Palace, following her death. It comes after criticism of the family's response to Diana's sudden death.

20 November 1997

Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip celebrate their golden wedding anniversary.

9 February 2002

Queen Elizabeth's sister, Princess Margaret, dies after a long illness.



The Queen with her mother in 2000 (Getty)

30 March 2002

The Queen Mother dies just weeks after Margaret at the age of 101.

7 June 2002

The Queen reaches her golden jubilee after 50 years on the throne.

21 April 2006

The monarch celebrates her 80th birthday.

17 May 2011



The Independent's front cover from 18 May 2011, as the Queen became the first monarch to visit the Republic of Ireland in 100 years

The Queen becomes the first monarch to make an official state visit to the Republic of Ireland in 100 years.

4 June 2012

The Queen's diamond jubilee celebrations to mark 60 years on the throne take place outside Buckingham Palace.



Prince Philip, the Queen and Prince Charles at the Braemar Gathering in 2012 (Getty)

9 September 2015

Queen Elizabeth II becomes Britain's longest-reigning monarch, after ruling for over 23,226 days. She surpasses her great-great-grandmother Queen Victoria's reign.

21 April 2016

The Queen turns 90 years old.

9 January 2021

Both the Queen and Prince Philip receive their first coronavirus vaccines at Windsor Castle.

9 April 2021

The Queen's husband of 73 years, Prince Philip, dies at Windsor Castle.



The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh in 2007 (Fiona Hanson/AFP/Getty)

17 April 2021

The Queen attends the funeral of her husband and sits on her own during the service at St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, owing to Covid restrictions.

6 February 2022

The Queen marks 70 years on the throne, and prepares to celebrate her platinum jubilee in June. Later this month, she tests positive for Covid and undertakes mostly virtual engagements.

29 March 2022

The Queen attends Prince Philip's memorial at Westminster Abbey along with other members of the royal family.

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Poor still face fuel poverty this winter, warn charities

Truss's freeze leaves bills almost double last year's level



Charities call for more targeted help for the most vulnerable (Getty)

ANDREW WOODCOCK
POLITICAL EDITOR

Liz Truss's energy price freeze will not be enough to save as many as 2.2 million families from being forced into fuel poverty

this winter, charities have warned.

A £2,500 limit on average domestic energy bills for the next two years will still leave costs almost double last winter's level, delivering a "knockout blow" to many households, said the anti-poverty Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF).

There were calls for more targeted help for the most vulnerable, including those on very low incomes, the elderly and disabled people who need 24-hour power for medical equipment.

Citizens Advice called for action to ensure that energy companies do not chase customers for debts or force people onto prepayment meters if they struggle to pay bills on time this winter.

The charity's chief executive Dame Clare Moriarty said Ms Truss's announcement would be "a huge relief to millions". But she added: "Energy bills are still sky high. A freeze may not be enough to reverse the devastating trend in people coming to us because they've run out of food or can't top up their gas and electric. The government needs to stand ready to provide more support for people on the very sharp end of this crisis."

National Energy Action said that Ms Truss's package will deliver lower bills to 24 million households and save 2 million from being plunged into fuel poverty. But chief executive Adam Scorer said that numbers in fuel poverty were nonetheless expected to increase from 4.5 million to 6.7 million households, rather than the 8.9 million forecast if no support had been offered.

"Even with this price freeze the average bill has doubled in a year," said Mr Scorer. "The new government must not forget that the most vulnerable need targeted support. Those who use more energy in their homes because of medical conditions, those who are elderly and those on very low incomes need extra help so they don't have to ration their usage, putting their physical and mental health at risk. Those on prepayment meters must not be forgotten either. They would benefit from a lower rate or additional relief from huge standing charges."

The JRF's chief economist Rebecca McDonald said that chancellor Kwasi Kwarteng should announce further targeted support for the most vulnerable in his emergency Budget later this month, to provide reassurance that help will be offered after Rishi Sunak's scheme of direct payments ends in April.

“Struggling households now have some meaningful reassurance but they remain in the dark about their security beyond April,” said Ms McDonald. “People are already unable to pay a range of bills so, even after today's announcement, the failure to offer further targeted support will feel like a knockout blow to the millions of people agonising about their finances.”

Justina Miltienyte of energy price website Uswitch.com, said that even after the price freeze and £400 direct payment, households could still be paying an average £237 more for energy over the three coldest months this year than they did last year.

“Amid the solace, it's important to remember that we are not out of the woods yet,” she said. “Even if rates are not as high as they were going to be, households will still be facing an extremely difficult winter.”

New research commissioned by the Money Advice Trust has found that one in nine UK adults (11 per cent) said that their monthly payments had already been raised to a level they could not afford – even before the rises which had been expected in October.

A significant proportion of callers to the charity's National Debtline service – 45 per cent, up from 37 per cent in 2021 – do not have enough money coming in to cover essential costs.

Trust chief executive Joanna Elson said: “Although bills won't now rise to as extreme levels, they remain high and are still difficult to afford for many, particularly people on low incomes. The next steps should include uprating benefits so that they keep pace with inflation and for Ofgem and energy suppliers to increase protections for people who do fall behind this winter.”

And James Taylor of disability equality charity Scope said:

“Freezing the price cap at twice the average cost of a year ago is a sticking plaster on the financial pain disabled people are experiencing.

“Nearly a quarter of disabled people say that their income is not enough to cover their bills. Right now, disabled people are anxious that they still won’t be able to power life-saving equipment this winter. Personal hygiene and dignity are turning into luxuries many disabled people won’t be able to afford.”

Unions said it was “remarkable” that Ms Truss was turning to taxpayers to fund the freeze, rather than putting a windfall tax on energy company excess profits.

TUC general secretary Frances O’Grady said: “The prime minister is making the wrong people pay. She should have imposed a much larger windfall tax on profiteering oil and gas giants. And she should have required all firms getting help with energy bills to commit to no lay-offs for the lifetime of the help, to protect livelihoods.

“And it’s not just energy bills soaring – so she needs to do more to help families get through the winter. That means a real plan to get wages rising, a big boost to universal credit, child benefit and pensions, and a massive rollout of home improvements to cut bills. And it’s time to bring energy retail into public ownership to make sure this crisis never happens again.”

Unite general secretary Sharon Graham said: “It is quite frankly remarkable that the prime minister is asking workers to pay for massive energy company profits. The economy is broken and workers will see through this plan to boost profiteering yet again.”

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NHS waiting list hits new record high of 6.8 million



Health leaders have called for the PM to take action to help the NHS (PA)

REBECCA THOMAS

HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

The NHS waiting list for treatment has hit a new high, as ambulance services and A&E departments experienced their worst summer on record.

A total of 6.8 million people were waiting to start treatment at the end of July, up from 6.7 million in June. This the highest figure recorded since data was first collected in August 2007,

when the waiting list stood at 4.2 million. It is up from 2.6 million in May 2010 when the Conservative government was elected.

Figures show that at least 80,107 patients waited 12 hours from a decision to admit in A&E to admission over June, July and August this year. This is up from 6,284 patients over the same period of time in 2021, and again represents the highest number since records began. Ambulance services also had their busiest ever summer, receiving 237,000 category 1 calls, and had the worst response times ever seen during the summer period.

The news comes as new health secretary Therese Coffey has set out her four key priorities: ambulances, backlogs, care, and doctors and dentists. Nigel Edwards, chief executive of think tank the Nuffield Trust, has warned that this month's performance figures show that the new prime minister and Ms Coffey face a "monumental" challenge.

He added: "This crisis has been years in the making. As our analysis published on Monday shows, the pandemic simply served to ramp up pressure on an already beleaguered health service, with staff shortages, a failure to tackle social care, and inadequate investment putting the NHS on the back foot when Covid hit. Even without the pandemic, we would have seen over 5 million people waiting for routine care."

Of those waiting for NHS treatment following a referral, 377,689 patients had waited more than 52 weeks in July, and 2,885 patients had waited more than 104 weeks, down from 3,861 in June. The government and NHS England had previously announced a target to eliminate all waits of more than two years, except when it is the patient's choice or for complex cases requiring specialist treatment, by July this year.

According to NHS England, there were 8,479 patients in hospital with Covid-19 each day this summer. This is compared with 3,313 in summer 2021 and 2,032 in 2020. Figures show that at least 13,338 beds a day in August were taken up by patients who no longer needed hospital care.

At least 28,800 patients were delayed more than 12 hours from a decision to admit to A&E in August, and 131,000 waited more than four hours.

The data on 12-hour waits from a decision to admit is likely to be around five times lower than the actual number of people who waited more than 12 hours from arriving in A&E. NHS England collects but does not publish the latter measurement. In August, *The Independent* revealed that 700,000 patients had waited more than 12 hours from arrival in A&E in the first six months of 2022.

A total of 71.4 per cent of patients in England were seen within four hours in A&E last month, up from 71 per cent in July, but still the second-worst performance on record. The NHS has a target for at least 95 per cent of patients to be admitted, transferred or discharged within four hours, but this has not been met since 2015.

Ambulance data shows that the number of patients getting a response in August was at its lowest level for nearly five years. Figures on ambulance delays showed that in August, category 1 patients waited on average 9 minutes 8 seconds for a response. This is slightly down from 9 minutes 35 seconds in July. Patients needing a category 1 response should be attended by an ambulance within 7 minutes.

For patients in the second most urgent category, ambulance response times hit 42 minutes 44 seconds in August, down from 59 minutes in July.

Meanwhile, NHS England figures show that 238,771 urgent cancer referrals were made by GPs in England in July, the highest number for that month in records going back to 2009. This is up from 229,093 referrals in June, and the fourth-highest number of monthly referrals on record. The proportion of patients in England seeing a specialist within two weeks in July was 77.8 per cent, up very slightly from 77.7 per cent in June.

Professor Sir Stephen Powis, NHS national medical director, said: "This month's figures show that despite another significant wave of Covid infection this summer, we are making significant

progress on reducing backlogs, with waits of more than 18 months down and the lowest number of patients waiting for tests and checks since we published our elective recovery plan.

“We also saw improvements in A&E performance and ambulance response times across all measures this month, despite responding to a record number of the most serious ambulance callouts across summer – up a third on pre-pandemic levels – and continued challenges discharging into the community and social care.”

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Extreme heat fuelling hate speech in US, study reveals



The sun sets during a dangerous heatwave in California last month (AFP/Getty)

ETHAN FREEDMAN

CLIMATE REPORTER, NEW YORK

Hate speech – whether directed at race, gender, sexual orientation, religion or otherwise – is pretty common on the internet.

But now a new study has found that extreme weather can make the internet an even more unpleasant place.

By analysing about 4 billion tweets from the United States, researchers found that both extremely cold weather and extremely hot weather led to more hate speech, with a higher rate for extreme heat.

These results point to yet another way the climate crisis could have profound repercussions for human wellbeing – far beyond the direct impacts of weather such as heatwaves, storms and droughts.

“For centuries, researchers have grappled with the question of how climate conditions affect human behaviour and societal stability,” Leonie Wenz, a researcher at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research in Denmark and one of the study authors, said in a statement.

“Now, with ongoing climate change, it is more important than ever.”

The research team used machine learning to identify about 75 million tweets with hate speech out of four billion posted between 2014 and 2020. “Hate speech” in this context included anything that matched a UN definition – meaning discriminatory language on “religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, colour, descent, gender or other identity factor”.

The team then tagged the tweets by time and location and then matched each with the weather in that location at the time of posting. Results were published on Wednesday in the journal *The Lancet Planetary Health*.

The fewest number of hate tweets occurred on the most moderate weather days, with temperatures between about 12C (54F) and 21C. But the colder and hotter the days got, the more hate speech the researchers encountered.

Between about -6C and -3C, the number of hate speech tweets rose by 12.5 per cent compared with the most moderate weather days.

On hot days, it was even worse. The researchers found a 22 per cent increase in hate tweets on days where the temperature hit

between about 42C and 45C, compared to the most moderate days.

The Independent has contacted Twitter for comment.

The increase in hate speech at temperature extremes held true for a wide variety of political landscapes and income levels.

Low-income, middle class and wealthy areas all saw a rise in hate speech on very hot or cold days, as did cities that voted Democratic in 2016 and cities that voted Republican in 2016.

The same goes for religion. The researchers only had enough data to meaningfully compare Catholic and Evangelical areas, but both predominantly Catholic and predominantly Evangelical communities saw a rise in hate speech during temperature extremes.

“Even in high-income areas where people can afford air conditioning and other heat mitigation options, we observe an increase in hate speech on extremely hot days,” study author Anders Levermann, a researcher at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, said via the statement.

The researchers pointed out that other studies have also found a connection between heat and violence or aggression.


The increase in violent, aggressive and discriminatory speech online can have real-world consequences. Online hate speech can be correlated with hate crimes, the authors said in a press release, and targets of online hate speech can face serious mental health challenges.

As the climate crisis causes an increase in extreme weather, particularly extreme heat, these hate speech problems could become more apparent.

Some climate experts have also worried that far-right movements could use concerns of environmental destruction as a way to spread xenophobia and racism.

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Police chiefs sacked over behaviour at work party



Mark Warrender, Marc Budden and Paul Staniforth lost their jobs following allegations of gross misconduct made in 2019 (Gwent Police)

CHIARA GIORDANO

Three high-ranking police officers have been sacked for inappropriate behaviour at a retirement party.

Gwent Police's Detective Chief Superintendent, Marc Budden, Detective Chief Inspector Paul Staniforth and former Chief Superintendent Mark Warrender all attended the event held for a former chief constable in Cardiff city centre in June 2019. Mr Warrender was accused of a sexual offence against a female officer, while Mr Budden and Mr Staniforth faced allegations of misconduct. During hearings held between 7 April and 6 September, it was proven that Mr Warrender had inappropriately touched the officer.

All three were found to have had inappropriate conversations with the woman, who was described as a more junior member of police staff. They all failed to challenge or report the improper behaviour of the others involved in the conversation.

Mr Budden was also found to have engaged in inappropriate behaviour while on duty, provided a dishonest account of his conduct, inappropriately disclosed information about the misconduct and criminal investigation to the victim and failed to disclose a conflict of interest in relation to the incident. He was also accused of improperly influencing the misconduct and criminal investigation, but police and the legal representatives involved in the disciplinary process were unable to confirm the outcome of that allegation. Mr Budden and Mr Staniforth were sacked without notice after the misconduct hearing concluded on Tuesday, while the panel said Mr Warrender would have been dismissed had he not retired from the force yesterday.

The lawyer who chaired the hearing excluded the press and public from proceedings and directed that only a brief summary of the findings be released afterwards. The decision to hold the hearings behind closed doors was criticised by several Senedd members, who said it was important for the public to have confidence in the police in the wake of the murder of Sarah Everard by a Metropolitan Police officer.



Budden, pictured here in 2015, was also found to have engaged in inappropriate behaviour while on duty (PA)

Prior to the misconduct hearing, Avon and Somerset Police carried out an independent investigation into the criminal allegations made against Mr Budden and Mr Warrender and submitted a file to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) for consideration in 2020. In March 2021, the CPS decided there was “insufficient evidence” to bring any criminal charges, according to the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC). The three will be barred from working as police officers in future.

Deputy Chief Constable Amanda Blakeman said: “This outcome sends a clear message that these kinds of behaviours will not be tolerated within Gwent Police. The public expect high standards of integrity from us and where officers abuse their position of power they will be held to account. Over the past three years we’ve reflected on behaviours and changed our culture. This event was a stark reminder to us that the highest standards of behaviour must be upheld by all, on or off duty. Every day the vast majority of our officers behave with professionalism and honesty when serving their local community and behaviour such as this lets us all down. The chair’s decision to hold the hearing

in private meant that individuals in this case felt able to participate in the process.”

Leader of the Welsh Liberal Democrats Jane Dodds MS said:

“The actions of these men, who were meant to be trusted members of the community is appalling. It is utterly outrageous that it has taken three years to conduct these misconduct hearings. This represents a substantial use of taxpayers’ money that could have and should have been conducted much faster. It was also wrong that the press were continually barred from the proceedings. Trust is key to policing and attempts to hold hearings in private do nothing towards building and maintaining that trust. Lessons must be learnt from this ordeal to make sure it never happens again.”

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By Numbers Uneven playing field

Clubs with the highest/lowest squad value in this season's Uefa Champions League group phase



Source: Transfermarkt.de



Pictures of the Day



Let there be light

Lanterns are displayed ahead of the mid-autumn festival in Hong Kong. *EPA*



Up the spout

A tornado, or waterspout, is witnessed over the Veronese part of Lake Garda, northern Italy. *EPA*



Sundowner

A man sits on a boat in Dal Lake as the sun sets in Srinagar, India. *AFP*



Anti-war dance

A Ukrainian-American dancer from Odesa performs in support of Ukraine's enduring art and culture scene in Covent Garden, London. *PA*



Jumping for joy

A trainer motions for a dog to jump over a hurdle during a show at the Pet Expo Championship 2022 in Bangkok, Thailand. *EPA*

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Home news in brief



The UKHSA urges those contacted to come forward for their Covid booster jabs (AP)

Covid infections ‘set to grow again in coming weeks’

Covid infections could increase in the coming weeks as respiratory infections rise, the UK Health Security Agency warns. Cases of Covid-19 decreased in the first week of September, according to the latest data. However, this comes as other acute respiratory infections are on the up, slightly, from 111 to 116 over the same period.

Dr Jamie Lopez Bernal, consultant epidemiologist at the UKHSA, said: “The latest Covid indicators provide more

positive news, as Covid-19 case rates and hospitalisations continue to decline. However, with respiratory viruses increasing in circulation in the winter months we can expect to see growing cases of Covid-19 in the coming weeks. We urge all who are contacted to come forward and accept their booster when called for their jab. The NHS booking system is now open for immunosuppressed people and those aged over 75.”

Man arrested in connection with Pratt-Korbel murder

A man has been arrested on suspicion of assisting an offender in connection with the murder of nine-year-old Olivia Pratt-Korbel. The 29-year-old was held yesterday after warrants were executed at three properties in the West Derby area of Liverpool, a Merseyside Police spokesman said. Searches at the properties continue and the man will be questioned by detectives.

Olivia was shot in her home in Dovecot, Liverpool, on August 22, when a gunman chased convicted burglar Joseph Nee inside at about 10pm. *PA*

Driver caught on doorbell cam pelting cat with stones

An Evri delivery man has been sacked after he was caught on a doorbell camera throwing stones at a family’s cat in Milton Keynes. The disturbing clip shows how the courier first attempted to swat the cat, Tumble, with a large letter he had been delivering while shouting at the terrified pet.

But seconds later, he took another swipe at the cat before picking up a large stone from the front garden and hurling it at the pet, prompting it to flee. After speaking to bosses at Evri, Tumble’s owner Lisa Ferraby praised them for acting so quickly in sacking the driver the next day. *PA*

MMA star McGregor charged with new driving offence

Conor McGregor is facing an additional charge of careless driving in conjunction with six existing driving offences, a court

has heard. The MMA star, 33, appeared at Blanchardstown District Court in Dublin yesterday morning after the judge adjourned the case in June while the Director of Public Prosecutions considered charges against the fighter.

McGregor had been travelling in his €170,000 (£148,000) Bentley Continental GT along the N4 in west Dublin when he was stopped by gardai on 22 March. He appeared in court on 7 April over two counts of dangerous driving on the date. He was also charged with driving without insurance and a licence and failing to produce a certificate of insurance or licence.

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US unveils more than \$2bn in military aid for Ukraine



Antony Blinken meets children during his visit to a children's hospital in Kyiv yesterday (Pool/AFP/Getty)

RORY SULLIVAN

US secretary of state Antony Blinken arrived in Kyiv as America announced a further package of almost \$2.7bn (£2.4bn) military aid for Ukraine. The announcement was made by the US defence secretary Lloyd Austin at a US air base in Ramstein, Germany. Weapons include howitzers, munitions, Humvee vehicles and anti-tank systems.

It comes on top of a previous \$13bn (£11.3bn) in military aid for Ukraine previously announced by Washington. The announcement was also made as Ukraine pressed a counter-offensive against Russia in the south, east and north of the country. “This is a very important signal that the United States is with us. For us this is a guarantee that we can return our territories and our land,” Volodymyr Zelensky said in video comments. Mr Blinken met the Ukrainian leader at his fortified presidential administration building in Kyiv, and said his visit came at a “pivotal moment” for Ukraine, noting the counteroffensive was proving effective.

“I think the reason for this success is that this is your homeland, not Russia’s,” he told Mr Zelensky. Earlier, President Zelensky had hailed his forces’ military gains, saying the whole country feels “proud” of its “warriors”. In a late-night address on Wednesday, the Ukrainian president said he had received “good news” regarding his soldiers’ counteroffensive against Russia in the northeastern Kharkiv region.

Although he did not name the places that the Ukrainian army had recaptured, he thanked the brigades there for their bravery. “I think every citizen feels proud of our warriors. It is a well-deserved pride, a right feeling,” Mr Zelensky said. “Each success of our military in one direction or another changes the general situation along the entire frontline in favour of Ukraine.”



Blinken and defence secretary Lloyd Austin either side of Biden are offering financial support to thwart Russia (AP)

Mr Zelensky added that every loss inflicted on Russia helped Ukraine in its defence of other parts of its territory, including the eastern Donbas region. Oleksiy Arestovych, one of the president's advisers, also spoke of Ukraine's successes near Kharkiv, noting that its advances could lead to Russian troops being encircled. The speed of the Ukrainian counterattack in the northeast appears to have taken Moscow by surprise.

Using "tactical surprise" to their advantage, Ukrainian forces advanced 20km (12 miles) into Russian-occupied territory on Wednesday, according to the Institute for the Study of War (ISW). This resulted in the recapture of almost 400 square kilometres (154 square miles) of land, also according to the ISW.

The US think tank also said that Kyiv's counterattack in the south near the Russian-controlled city of Kherson is paying dividends. It is likely that Ukraine's Kharkiv offensive is being helped by the reallocation of Russian soldiers to the southern front, the ISW explained. "Ukrainian forces in southeastern Kharkiv oblast are likely exploiting Russian force reallocation to the southern axis to conduct an opportunistic yet highly effective counteroffensive northwest of Izyum," it said.

In its latest military update on Vladimir Putin's war, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) said Ukraine was successfully targeting Russian river crossings near Kherson. "Ukraine has probably destroyed a military pontoon bridge at Darivka, which Russian forces had deployed after the nearby road bridge was severely damaged," the MoD said, adding that such operations slowed the Kremlin's ability to deploy extra soldiers and resources from the east. Mr Blinken also met with Ukrainian foreign minister Dmytro Kuleba in Kyiv.

The senior American official will announce a new \$2bn (£1.74bn) fund to help Ukraine and other countries' militaries. Roughly half of the total will be given to Kyiv, a US state department office said. Mr Blinken's trip followed US president Joe Biden's approval of a separate \$675m (£587m) weapons package. Washington will send more ammunitions, Humvees and anti-tank systems, officials said.

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Bucha killers must face justice, says ex-UN chief



Former UN secretary general Ban Ki-moon, centre, and Colombia's former president Juan Manuel Santos, centre right, on a visit to Bucha near Kyiv, Ukraine (AP)

LOUISE BOYLE

SENIOR CLIMATE CORRESPONDENT, NEW YORK

Former United Nations secretary general Ban Ki-moon has spoken of his horror at the slaughter of hundreds of Ukrainian citizens whose bodies were dumped in mass graves by Russian troops.

Mr Ban recounted his visit to Ukraine last month at the invitation of Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky.

“We visited Bucha and Irpin where Russian soldiers ruthlessly killed civilian people randomly. I was horrified by these atrocities. This is totally unacceptable,” he told *The Independent* on Tuesday.

In the early weeks of the invasion, Russian ground troops attempted to capture the capital Kyiv but were repelled by Ukrainian forces.

In March, hundreds of civilians were found dead in Bucha and Irpin, two areas to the northwest of the capital. Photographs and video showed corpses piled into trenches and left in the streets. Ukrainian authorities say 458 bodies were found in the Bucha area, including 12 children.

A number of the victims were unable to be identified and buried in graves marked only with numbers, not names, it was reported last month.

“We have spoken out in the strongest possible terms that justice should be brought, and there should be accountability. Those people who committed this kind of crime must be brought to justice,” Mr Ban told *The Independent*. “If not today, tomorrow. If not tomorrow, soon in the future.”

He added: “I again urge Russia to stop this illegal aggression, and work for peace and stability of the Ukrainian people.”

Mr Ban served as UN secretary general from 2007 until 2016 and now co-chairs the Ban Ki-moon Centre for Global Citizens.

He visited Bucha and Irpin with Juan Manuel Santos, former president of Colombia, in their capacity as members of The Elders. The non-governmental initiative, founded by Nelson Mandela in 2007, works to promote peace and human rights around the world.

The leaders visited a church in Bucha, where 116 bodies were found in a mass grave after Russian soldiers pulled out. Mr Santos, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate like the late South African leader, described the massacre as a crime against humanity.

More than six months after Russian leader Vladimir Putin ordered the invasion, Ukraine continues to fend off the larger, more powerful Russian army, bolstered by military aid from allies including the United States, the UK and other European countries.

“Strong solidarity should be shown by the world’s people to the people of Ukraine,” Mr Ban said. “I was very humbled, and very much encouraged at the same time, by such a strong resilience to keep their country’s sovereignty [and] territorial integrity. I think they have the right to self-defence. We need to render all support available in our hands.”

Russian leader Vladimir Putin continues to rebuff pressure to stop the war, and brushed off foreign sanctions this week saying his military would continue attacks.

Global leaders along with the International Atomic Energy Agency, the UN’s nuclear watchdog, have urged both sides to secure a safe zone after shelling continued near Ukraine’s Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant on Wednesday.

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North Korea adopts laws to create a ‘socialist fairyland’



Two women wear traditional hanbok dresses as they walk on a street in Pyongyang – the country’s rubberstamp parliament is approving legislation to ‘spruce up the country’ (AFP/Getty)

ALISHA RAHAMAN SARKAR

North Korea’s Supreme People’s Assembly has passed legislation aimed at converting the nation into a “beautiful and civilised socialist fairyland”. The country’s rubber-stamp parliament convened on Wednesday to adopt two laws to improve landscaping and rural development, according to state news agency KCNA.

The laws are aimed at helping the nation's supreme leader Kim Jong-un bring about "a radical turn" among the less developed rural communities of the hermit nation. The landscaping policy will help in achieving "a rapid development of the Korean-style socialist rural community and spruce up the country into a beautiful and civilised socialist fairyland", an assembly member told the gathering, according to state media.

The legislation was adopted days after Mr Kim vowed to improve the livelihoods of North Koreans affected by the economic crisis plaguing the nation in the wake of the Covid outbreak and a number of natural disasters. International sanctions over Mr Kim's nuclear ambitions, coupled with pandemic restrictions, have increased the risk of starvation in the country. The West has accused Mr Kim of letting his citizens suffer while he directs resources into military projects. Washington this week claimed Russia had approached the North to buy ammunition in an effort to support the cash-strapped government.

Pyongyang dismissed the claims, calling the report "fake". A report by 38 North, a US-based site that monitors North Korea, stated Mr Kim's vow to rebuild the Komdok province in the country's north that was ravaged by Typhoon Maysak in 2020 and transform it into a "model" mining community has made little progress.

Meanwhile, American and South Korean officials are scheduled to meet next week to discuss "comprehensive measures" to deter North Korea in some of the highest-level talks between the countries in years. The Extended Deterrence Strategy and Consultation Group (EDSCG), which includes vice-ministerial defence and diplomatic officials from both nations, plans to "discuss in depth comprehensive measures to deter North Korea", the South Korean foreign ministry said in a statement yesterday.

The talks will include measures to "strengthen the effectiveness of extended deterrence in the face of the severe security situation on the Korean peninsula". It will be the group's first meeting since 2018, when both countries began efforts to

engage with North Korea diplomatically. South Korean president Yoon Suk-yeol, who took office in May, has vowed to boost his country's military capabilities and strengthen what he calls "extended deterrence".

Mr Yoon had previously extended an economic aid offer to the North in return for nuclear disarmament but said he would respond to Mr Kim's provocations "sternly".

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Bannon hit with fraud and money laundering charges



Trump's former chief strategist arrives to surrender in New York (Reuters)

ANDREW FEINBERG

Steve Bannon, the former White House chief strategist who was convicted on two counts of criminal contempt of Congress earlier this year, has been charged with money laundering, conspiracy, and scheming to defraud supporters of Donald

Trump who thought they were funding a border wall along the US-Mexico border.

Bannon, who currently hosts the *War Room* podcast and show on the right-wing Real America's Voice network, arrived at the Manhattan district attorney's office yesterday to surrender. As he entered the building, he shouted: "They're persecuting people!" to a group of reporters who'd gathered to witness his arrival.

The six-count indictment against Bannon and the non-profit We Build The Wall, Inc, is related to charges the ex-Trump aide once faced in federal court for defrauding donors in a \$25m scheme to construct a privately funded border wall along the US-Mexico border.

Federal agents arrested him on board a yacht belonging to a Chinese exile and billionaire after a grand jury indicted him and three others in August 2020.

Prosecutors at the time charged that he siphoned more than \$1m (£871,000) from donations to pay for personal expenses, but that case was dropped after then-president Donald Trump issued his former adviser a last-minute pardon.

According to a copy of the 22-page indictment obtained by *The Independent*, the New York district attorney's case against Bannon closely tracks the one he evaded with Mr Trump's assistance.

Manhattan district attorney Alvin Bragg and New York State attorney general Letitia James are set to discuss the charges at a press conference.

In a statement, Mr Bragg said: "It is a crime to turn a profit by lying to donors, and in New York, you will be held accountable."

"As alleged, Stephen Bannon acted as the architect of a multi-million dollar scheme to defraud thousands of donors across the country – including hundreds of Manhattan residents," he added.

Ms James also issued a separate statement in which she said the ex-Trump aide "took advantage of his donors' political views to

secure millions of dollars which he then misappropriated”.

“Mr Bannon lied to his donors to enrich himself and his friends,” Ms James said. “We will continue to take on fraudulent behaviour in every corner of society, including white-collar criminals, because no one is above the law”.

For his part, Bannon has decried the case against him as “phoney charges” and attacked Mr Bragg as a “Soros-backed DA” bent on stopping his pro-Trump podcast.

“The [Southern District of New York] did the exact same thing in August 2020 to try to take me out of the election. It didn't work then, it certainly won't work now,” he said, adding that his latest legal troubles are “nothing more than a partisan political weaponisation of the criminal justice system”.

Bannon also said he would “never stop fighting” and vowed that “they” would “have to kill [him]”.

The case against him in New York is not the only criminal jeopardy faced by the former naval officer and investment banker turned political strategist and podcast host.

Earlier this year, a Washington, DC, jury convicted Bannon on two counts of criminal contempt of congress stemming from his decision to ignore subpoenas for documents and testimony from the House January 6 select committee.

The federal district judge who is overseeing Bannon’s case rejected his request for a new trial last week. Bannon’s attorneys had argued that jury instructions given before deliberations were improper and claimed that his rights were violated because he wasn’t permitted to call members of congress as witnesses.

“Defendant has not shown that the testimony from any member of the House of Representatives that he sought would be material,” Judge Carl Nichols said in his ruling.

Bannon will be sentenced in the federal case on 21 October and could face as much as two years in federal prison.

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World news in brief



The scene where the stabbing suspect was arrested in Saskatchewan (AP)

Second Saskatchewan suspect dead from self-inflicted wounds

Myles Sanderson, a suspect in the weekend stabbing spree that killed 10 and wounded 19 people across a First Nations community in rural Canada, died from self-inflicted wounds after being arrested on Wednesday, according to officials. The 32-year-old was apprehended on Wednesday near the town of Rosthern, Saskatchewan.

The arrest brings to a close the massive, four-day manhunt for Sanderson and his brother Damien, who was found dead on Monday from wounds that did not appear to be self-inflicted, police said.

Saskatoon Tribal Council chief Mark Arcand, who lost his sister and nephew in the killings, said the arrests mean the community can begin to recover from its trauma.

Memphis shooting rampage

An hours-long shooting spree in Memphis, Tennessee, has led to the arrest of a suspect – Ezekiel Kelly, 19 – and the deaths of four people. Three others were injured.

The rampage, which was live-streamed on Facebook, began on Wednesday morning in Memphis's Binghampton neighbourhood, and ended in a high-speed car chase across the Mississippi-Tennessee border just before 9pm, police said.

Up, up and away

A man in China drifted 320km for two days after he lost control of his hydrogen balloon. The man, surnamed Hu, and his partner were collecting pine nuts in the field on Sunday in Heilongjiang province in northeastern China when they lost control of the balloon.

His partner jumped off to safety but Mr Hu drifted away. Rescuers were only able to contact the man by mobile phone the next morning and instructed him to slowly deflate the balloon to begin the descent. But the man continued to float for another day before reaching the ground in the Fangzheng region near the border with Russia, on Tuesday morning.

"I almost gave up," Mr Hu said after his two-day-long extraordinary aerial journey. "Thanks to the rescuers, otherwise, I wouldn't be alive."

All at sea

Police in India's northern state of Uttar Pradesh have arrested four members of a gang for allegedly smuggling ambergris, worth more than £1m. In a raid conducted in Lucknow on Tuesday, the police found 4kg of the substance.

Produced in the digestive system of sperm whales to protect them from damage by sharp squid beaks and other debris, ambergris is a waxy, solid substance used in perfumes and medicines. The sale of ambergris is forbidden under India's Wildlife (Protection) Act of 1972.

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Travelling into 2023: top holiday tips with Simon Calder and Helen Coffey

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Truss's empty statement did nothing to defeat Labour's case for higher windfall taxes



The PM had so little new to announce yesterday, the argument was simply a repeat of her exchanges with Starmer the day before (UK Parliament/AFP/Getty)

JOHN RENTOUL



Until the whispers about the Queen spread, prompting frontbenchers to scurry in and out of the Commons chamber and the press gallery to

empty, one of the biggest announcements in British history was surprisingly dull.

Sir Lindsay Hoyle, the speaker, opened proceedings by complaining that the written ministerial statement had only just been published, which didn't give most MPs time to read it. Not that it would take them very long, as it was just 220 words, repeating what had already been briefed to the media and adding that "cost projections ... are uncertain".

Liz Truss then said the same things that had already been briefed to the media, and announced some "reviews". In reply, Keir Starmer repeated what he had said at Prime Minister's Questions on Wednesday, only at greater length and to less effect.

Although there was some debate about the prime minister's plan, and how it should be funded, which were the important issues, much of the argument between the two sides of the Commons degenerated into a pointless "yah" and "boo". The Conservatives accused Labour of having done nothing to secure Britain's energy self-sufficiency during their 13 years in power; Labour accused the Conservatives of doing nothing during their more recent 12 years.

Both sides were right and wrong. Labour laid the foundation for the big increase in wind power that was largely delivered by the Tories and Liberal Democrats in the coalition; neither managed to build any new nuclear power stations – mainly because they were too expensive until the world price of natural gas suddenly went up.

Starmer replied by quoting the chief executive of BP, who was asked which investments the company would cancel if there was a windfall tax, and said: "None"



Yesterday's business ought to have been about the immediate consequences of that price rise. But because Truss had so little news to announce, the argument was simply a repeat of her exchanges with Starmer the previous day. She said: "We will not be giving in to the leader of the opposition who calls for this to be funded through a windfall tax." She said that would discourage investment.

Starmer replied by quoting the chief executive of BP, who was asked which investments the company would cancel if there was a windfall tax, and said: "None." The Labour leader is right. He won the argument on Wednesday and he won it again yesterday. Once gas prices go beyond a certain point, which they passed a while ago, the economic case against windfall taxes is feeble. I think Truss and Kwarteng are heading for trouble by resisting it, but I have misjudged her political instincts before and it may be that the absolutism of "no new taxes" will prevail.

There was no evidence for it in Wednesday's focus group convened by Matt Chorley for Times Radio: the voters in the group liked what they saw of Truss, of whom they had been almost completely unaware, having tuned out of the entire Tory leadership campaign, but they agreed strongly with Starmer about taxing oil and gas company windfall profits.

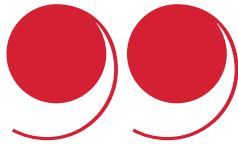
There is, in practice, less difference between government and opposition than the ideological divide suggests. Oil and gas profits are already taxed at a higher rate than normal corporation tax – 40 per cent as against 19 per cent – and a windfall tax has already been imposed since May, raising the 40 per cent to 65 per cent, which was decided by Boris Johnson and Rishi Sunak and voted for by the Commons months ago. Labour proposes "extending" the windfall tax, but has so far proposed only to increase its yield from £5bn a year to £8bn.

But politically, the gap between the parties is a chasm. As Starmer said, yesterday and the day before: every extra pound raised by an additional windfall tax is a pound that the government would raise by borrowing. That is a simple truth that Truss tried to avoid in her statement yesterday, as she avoided the word "borrowing", and only mentioned "debt" to

claim that the cost of servicing it would be lower because inflation would be lower. She tried to pretend that she would “defray the cost of this intervention in three ways”, none of which was borrowing.

The first of them was “by ramping up supply”. Starmer rather laboriously quoted Kwarteng from a few months ago saying, correctly, that “additional North Sea production won’t materially affect the wholesale price”.

But the real difference between the parties, now that Truss has stolen Starmer’s policy of freezing energy prices for households, with “equivalent” support for businesses, charities and public sector organisations, is that she would borrow all of it, whereas Labour would pay for some of it from higher windfall taxes. Labour is on the right side of public opinion on this one, and Truss insists she won’t “give in” again.



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PM can reverse Osborne's damage to poorer students – but don't hold your breath



The cost of living crisis must seem an insurmountable problem for prospective students (Getty)

ED DORRELL



Last week I stumbled across a lovely documentary on the telly about the history of *University Challenge*. It was a truly joyful

programme about a joyful quiz show. It was also a wonderful reminder of the changing face of our universities and students.

The earliest black-and-white episodes largely featured white men from Oxbridge colleges competing over their knowledge of the classics (our most recent former prime minister would have fitted right in). When the documentary jumped forward several decades, we found the teams infinitely more diverse, from an infinitely greater range of higher education institutions, and the questions infinitely less predictable.

In short, it's a better programme that reflects a much more dynamic university sector, that recruits from a much, much wider pool of young people. Even the Oxbridge teams are a lot less white, male and posh. So far, so good. It wasn't always expected to be this way. At various stages on the route to the very high levels of tuition fee liability that most students now build up, many people not unreasonably warned that the threat of £27,000 debt would put at risk UCAS applications from young people who grew up in deprived communities – and those whose families don't have a history of post-18 study.

But thankfully these warnings have largely been proven wrong. The picture is far from perfect, but over time undergraduate recruitment at even our most elite universities, Oxford and Cambridge, and (most of) the so-called “red bricks”, has been from an ever-growing catchment. Twenty years ago, the vast majority of undergraduates at Oxbridge had been privately educated – that figure now stands at around 30 per cent for both.

This country's university sector is a success story, and the diversity of its students plays an increasingly important part in it. We should not let that slide



Research carried out by Public First, where I am a director, found that the fear of tuition fee debt among young people has been receding as the idea becomes more and more established. This, at least partly, explains why campuses are now so diverse – and becoming more so. The same research, however, had a nasty sting in the tail for those of us who want universities to keep recruiting from every corner of our society: that prospective students are increasingly scared of managing the cost of living while they are actually at university.

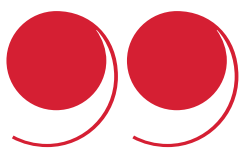
That this research was carried out well before the current economic crisis had taken hold of the national conscience should worry us all. I strongly suspect that the same young people we spoke to a year ago who had misgivings about whether they could afford the rent or bills they would need to pay on the way to graduating are now not even bothering to open their UCAS forms. It must seem an insurmountable problem.

Luckily for Liz Truss and her new education secretary, Kit Malthouse, there is an easy solution to this problem – one that has been staring various Conservative administrations in the face for seven or eight years. They should reverse George Osborne's shameful decision in 2015 to abolish mean-tested grants.

Even at the time, the move looked regressive – and, to my mind, completely unnecessary. Today, righting that wrong is a no-brainer. In these bleak days, it could not be more important to tell young people from poor homes that as a society we recognise their fears about bills piling up – and that we want to support them if they want keep studying. Indeed, this country's university sector is a huge success story, and the diversity of its students plays an increasingly important part in it. We should not let that slide.

The cost of living crisis will undoubtedly leave many hideous stains on our society for years to come. One that could be avoided before it even takes hold is the reversal of years of progress in the demographic make-up of campuses. I dearly

hope Ms Truss and Mr Malthouse will give it some thought. I have my doubts.



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What former PMs should – and should not – do next



Boris Johnson could pick up where he left off on 'Have I Got News For You' (Getty)

CATHY NEWMAN



As you read this, Boris Johnson is no doubt yoking his oxen to the plough, Cincinnatus-style. And after Liz Truss's wholesale cabinet clear-out, he's not the only Conservative MP contemplating a world outside government.

It got me thinking how hard it is for ministers attuned to the daily battles and brouhaha of ministerial life to adapt to the quiet mundanities of Civvy Street. And the painful truth that some make a better job of it than others.

After observing several decades of ministers shuffling from the frontline to the backbenches, I've compiled a handy list of dos and don'ts. Here it is:

DO speak up in the Commons.

Rishi Sunak did this only yesterday, deploying knowledge gleaned from his many years in the Treasury during a debate on the Financial Services and Markets Bill. Theresa May is a past master at it. She rose to her feet to support Truss in her PMQs debut – no doubt a relief for the Downing Street newbie given May's backbench zingers aimed at Johnson.

DO stay relevant and classy.

May always has something of substance to say in the Commons and this is half the battle for the ministerial has-been. But while Johnson's predecessor retains her influence in parliamentary debates, other former PMs and ministers make their voice heard by championing passions and causes outside the chamber. Labour prime minister Gordon Brown left Westminster, but remains a figure of some clout by campaigning on education across the globe.

DO selected media moments.

Former prime ministers can and should pick and choose when they want to opine, so when they do speak out it tends to matter more. Sir John Major's interventions on Brexit and on Johnson's lockdown rule-breaking led the news because he chose his moment. Sir Tony Blair is the same, despite the controversy over his past record and the Iraq war.

More dubious is whether to accept invitations to head to the jungle or onto the dance floor. It worked for former culture secretary Nadine Dorries, but chomping on camel toe and ostrich anus (as she did) isn't a great look for most former ministers. Ditto former Labour chancellor Ed Balls' *Strictly*

Come Dancing turn. For him, it did wonders, showing us all he had a warmth and sense of humour some had never previously glimpsed. As a result it paved the way for a new TV career.

Boris Johnson could pick up where he left off on *Have I Got News For You*. And there's little doubt he'll be able to "put hay in the loft" (as one friend has memorably described his post-Downing Street earning potential) with any number of media and publishing opportunities.

But here are a few pitfalls for him and his ousted colleagues to bear in mind:

DON'T be a backseat driver.

Margaret Thatcher believed she was "very good" at steering from behind but Major described her interventions as "intolerable". Truss may soon take the same view if Johnson provides a running commentary.

DON'T take a controversial job.

David Cameron's post-political career was jogging along quite nicely until he made millions from the collapsed finance company Greensill Capital. Now he's struggling to put that debacle behind him.

Likewise, Blair has been criticised for his role advising countries with poor human rights records, such as Kazakhstan. At the time, a spokesperson said he'd always been clear about the country's "real challenges over issues of human rights and political reform" but insisted that it had made "huge progress".

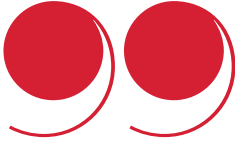
DON'T publish your memoirs if they're more than 400 pages.

Tony Blair's magnum opus ran to 700 pages, as did David Cameron's. But few people are *that* interesting. So rather than bloviating, brevity is the name of the game. Fabulous indiscretion helps too. Alan Clark's diaries did the job – at a mere 400 pages in paperback. I'm hoping Johnson's forthcoming thoughts are in a similar vein.

A final thought though for all those ex-ministers eyeing the future with apprehension: there's always the plough, and – like

Cincinnatus – the prospect of an eventual return to a top job.

Cathy Newman is presenter and investigations editor of Channel 4 News



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I signed up for solar panels – and my green energy dream turned into a nightmare



Solar Together neatly addresses the cost issue by pooling people together and getting companies that install the panels to bid on big, bulk orders (Getty)

JAMES MOORE



Solar power has become a hot ticket. Get panels on your roof and the energy crisis goes from major surgery to painful procedure. Get panels

on lots of roofs and it has the potential to reduce the nation's emissions and its reliance on wholesale gas markets, which go into overdrive when powerful psychopaths decide to start killing people in neighbouring countries.

There's a reason Tory backbencher Andrew Mitchell, writing for *The Guardian*, said of solar (and also wind): "We should be in no doubt where our price and security of supply interests now lie."

So, thought my wife and I, we've some money saved up. We're green-minded. One of us has been writing columns urging action on the climate crisis for years and would like not to be seen as a fool or hypocrite (okay, you can be the judge of the former). Let's do it.

We duly signed up to mayor of London Sadiq Khan's super duper solar scheme. I'm being sarcastic there, but you'll see why in a moment. The mayor's scheme is actually a fine idea. The problem with a solar set-up is that it can be horribly expensive upfront. Yes, it will eventually pay for itself, but it takes a long time, even though that has come down for obvious reasons.

Solar Together neatly addresses the cost issue by pooling people together and getting companies that install the panels to bid on big, bulk orders, in a reverse auction (cheapest wins) which reduces the unit price to the individual. Think of it like a green Groupon. It involves a number of local councils, not just London. Registration is currently open for Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Liverpool, Norfolk and Suffolk.

By making it cheaper, you obviously make solar more accessible to more people. In the absence of a more strategically minded government taking action to boost take-up through, say, tax breaks or grants, it's a win-win. Well, it ought to be.

Problems arise if the company that wins the bid isn't up to snuff. This has been our experience with an operation called Green Energy Together, which has turned our green energy dreams into a nightmare of cancellations, hours spent on the phone, and customer service ranging from supercilious to non-existent.

On five separate occasions, we waited hopefully for the promised kit to arrive. On five separate occasions, those hopes were dashed. If that sounds bad – and it is – I came across one person who'd endured seven such cancellations, sometimes without so much as a text to alert the householder.

This is how you earn a TrustPilot rating of “poor” (1.8 stars in this case). Some 61 per cent of the reviews are straight up “bad” (one star).

Here's a lesson from a school governor who sat in on some procurement decisions: the cheapest isn't always the best. It can leave you with a heap of expensive problems. It can damage the reputation of a scheme or industry.

This is too important for unsuitable operators to be unleashed on an unwitting public. It would be a dreadful shame if a fine idea, and a fine product, is spoiled by the very poor execution



Needless to say, this has proved particularly difficult for us, because one of us (me) has disabilities, which means I can't help with the house stuff that needs to be moved around if the installers ever turn up – now highly doubtful. We therefore have to work around my partner's schedule.

This is hardly a unique problem, or one just related to disability. People have jobs, kids etc. Their carefully laid plans to be home for the installation crew's arrival can get thrown for a loop if they don't turn up, and work that is promised just vanishes.

I can see one possible explanation for what's happened here – I contacted the company but got no response – is that they simply can't cope with the demand. If that's the case, where is the oversight from the mayor? This is bigger than just the pain endured by us and an unhappy selection of TrustPilot reviewers.

I fear unpleasant experiences like ours are inevitably going to become more common. Companies finding themselves in a booming – and inadequately regulated – market with lots of eager customers often behave with insouciance, if not outright contempt for those customers. The reputation of the industry gets damaged, and by extension, one means of improving Britain’s energy independence and emissions record, as Andrew Mitchell rightly recognised.

Public sector bodies like the mayor’s office (a spokesman said tackling climate change was “a top priority”) should look carefully at the companies they are dealing with.

For the record, a spokesperson for the mayor told me that there are “currently some delays to solar PV installations due to supply chain issues” and that “any failure to deliver is unacceptable, which is why the mayor’s environment and energy team will be following up on this issue immediately”.

I hope this is the case. They said that so far over 2,300 London residents have had panels installed through the Solar Together scheme, with hundreds more booked in.

Those people deserve a better experience than ours has been. This is too important for unsuitable operators to be unleashed on an unwitting public. It would be a dreadful shame if a fine idea, and a fine product, is spoiled by the very poor execution I and some other Londoners have experienced.



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Thomas and Friends is on track with its autistic train – but there's a long way to go



The news is a huge moment for both Elliot Garcia who voices the new character in the animated series, and for the autistic community as a whole (PA)

ELLIE MIDDLETON



This time last year, if you'd asked me to picture an autistic person, my imagination would have gone as far as somebody that looked like Sheldon

Cooper or *Rain Man*'s Raymond Babbitt. I thought “autistic” was synonymous with “socially awkward, rude, white men on the brink of genius” – and I don’t think I would have been alone in my misconception.

In fact, this misconception, which is hugely common in society’s representation of autism, is probably a huge part of the reason it took me until the age of 24 to be diagnosed – despite showing numerous signs that are glaringly obvious in hindsight. I never considered, and the people around me never considered, that I might be autistic. In part, because we had never seen anyone that looked like me, acted like me, or had anything in common with me have that label assigned to them.

This week, American toy giant Mattel announced that a new autistic character will be introduced to beloved children’s show, *Thomas and Friends* – and will be voiced by autistic actor Elliot Garcia.

This is a huge moment for the autistic community. Not only are we seeing autistic representation in one of the most established and renowned series in the world, we are also getting to experience that character being authentically voiced by an actor that is part of the community. Authentic autistic representation is surprisingly uncommon, with shows often instead opting to avoid outright labelling of autism, use neurotypical actors, and give the characters a combination of “quirky” (autistic) traits, in something which feels a lot to me like appropriation.

Although it is fantastic that authentic and positive representation is starting to appear in the media, we need to ensure that it is inclusive and reflective of a wider range of autistic people



So it really can not be underestimated just how huge of a moment this is – for both the brilliant young Elliot himself and for the autistic community as a whole. I am confident that the introduction of the character will have a life-changing effect on hundreds of thousands of autistic children, showing them that it's OK to be different, and that their matter-of-fact communication, sensory sensitivities and lack of eye contact are nothing to be ashamed of.

With that being said, there is still so much work to be done. If I had to take a guess at the gender, age and socioeconomic background of *Thomas and Friends*' main audience, I imagine it would be very similar to the group of people who are still most likely to receive an autism diagnosis in a timely manner: young, middle-class, cis, white boys.

So although it is fantastic that authentic and positive representation is starting to appear in the media, we need to ensure that it is inclusive and reflective of a wider range of autistic people – people of all genders, races, sexualities and backgrounds.

Yes, it's great that we have an autistic children's TV character. But we also need autistic women on talk shows, we need autistic people of colour on soaps, we need trans autistic people in movies. We need young autistic people in the spotlight and we need older autistic people in the spotlight. We need autistic representation to actually be representative of the whole autistic community.

Autism does not have a look. It is not confined to one very specific subset of people. Autistic people are as diverse as people in general, and autistic representation needs to be reflective of that.

So let's celebrate Elliot's new role, and let's celebrate Thomas the Tank Engine's new autistic friend. Most importantly, let's continue that momentum to bring more autistic people, and more diverse autistic people, into the public eye.

If five-year-old, 10-year-old or 15-year-old Ellie had seen the 25-year-old Ellie of today on her favourite TV programmes, in her

favourite magazine, or on the cinema screen, I am confident that she would have arrived at her lightbulb moment of diagnosis a whole lot sooner – and been a whole lot happier in herself in the process.



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Lord help Truss if her first 100 days in power go badly

It looks likely the start of the Truss era will contain as much drama as many PMs' careers, writes **Andrew Woodcock**



The new PM may not have that long to define her time in power (AFP/Getty)



have that long.

Most incoming prime ministers or presidents reckon that the first 100 days of their tenure will define their time in power. Liz Truss may not

The usual reasoning is that the public make their minds up quickly about a new leader. A series of major announcements can cement a positive impression which future mishaps and setbacks will only slowly erode. But a big flop – or a failure to do anything at all significant in the early weeks – can establish an image as a “dud” which will be difficult to shake off.

For Ms Truss, that crucial period for making a first impression has been hugely truncated. Not for her the luxury of picking and choosing the areas where she wants to make big interventions or launch reputation-building projects. Instead, she entered Downing Street at a moment of national crisis and the energy price freeze she announced on her second full day in power may be the most significant decision of her premiership.

The scale of the intervention – estimated at anything from £100bn-£150bn – is comparable in scale to the era-defining emergency responses to the 2008 financial crash and the 2020 outbreak of the Covid pandemic. How the public responds to the package of cost of living support could determine not only her immediate political fortunes but her long-term legacy in the history books. There was already doubt over whether Ms Truss would benefit from the usual “honeymoon period” enjoyed by most new PMs.

Some speculated that she may not even see out her first 100 days, with chatter in Westminster about a challenge to her position before Christmas if her cost of living response misfires



The fact that she was elected not by the public but by a narrow majority of the UK's 170,000 members of the Conservative Party and that she did not enjoy the declared support of a majority of her own MPs, meant that she missed out on the wave

of enthusiasm which sustained former premiers like Tony Blair or Boris Johnson in their first days in office.

Some speculated that she may not even see out her first 100 days, with chatter in Westminster about a challenge to her position before Christmas if her cost of living response misfires. And now the announcement of the Queen's death, which came just hours after she unveiled her energy freeze, threatened to overshadow both the support package itself and anything else the PM may have planned for the coming weeks.

However matters play out, it looks likely that the first 100 days of the Truss era will contain as much political drama as many PMs' entire careers.

Yours,

Andrew Woodcock

Political editor



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Social media paints Truss as 'thick' but then reveres Blair



In recent days I have seen Liz Truss described on social media as “thick”, as we have done regularly with Angela Rayner. Conversely, the same people revere Tony Blair and Gordon Brown as great oracles of wisdom.

The truth, however, is that Major led the Tories to a crushing annihilation and Blair and Brown – despite inheriting a solid economy – left the country with a trillion pound debt and greater wealth inequality.

So, who is really “thick” here? Or is this just proof of how misogynistic some people in the country are?

Richard Whiteside *Halifax*

Change direction

The destruction caused by the war in Ukraine continues to be devastating. Whether blame is assigned to Vladimir Putin’s aggression or Volodymyr Zelensky’s misguided Nato ambition may be of little relevance to all those losing their lives, their friends and relatives.

The election of a new British prime minister may be a unique opportunity to change direction, engage with both sides, and push for an immediate end to the war rather than pursuing a fight to the end conflict.

Bambos Charalambous *Manchester*

Bankrupt Britain

Liz Truss has gifted Vladimir Putin the mechanism to bankrupt Britain. The more the price of energy goes up, the more the burden on the treasury, and the lower the pound will fall, further increasing energy prices largely denominated in US dollars.

By choosing not to share the costs of holding energy prices down by a windfall tax on the primary beneficiaries, as well as on the national debt, she has shifted the responsibility to our children and grandchildren. The only ray of sunshine in this is that she will fail, and be forced to reconsider.

Chris King *London*

Losses will be carried forward

Tom Peck asks the question: “Should the government seize the massive profits but expect them [the energy companies] to weather the massive losses themselves?” It is a fair question but fails to take into account the crucial fact that those losses can be carried forward by the energy companies and used to offset future profits to lower their tax bills in profitable years. The untaxed profits, once the opportunity to tax them has passed, accrue to the companies and their shareholders.

The government has the opportunity to abate the cost of its market intervention by taxing the beneficiaries of that market. Whether it chooses to seize that opportunity will tell us if it is the true heir of pragmatic Thatcherism as Liz Truss would have us believe, or a parody of that creed.

Robin Bulow *Clacton-on-Sea*



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Section 2/ The Big Read

And the nominees are...

The shortlist for the Booker Prize was announced this week – but is it stressful for the nominated authors, and what can it mean for your writing career? **Charlotte Cripps** investigates



My word against yours: the six shortlisted authors (The Booker Prize)

The Booker Prize is like the Oscars for literature but how do authors feel about being shortlisted – or even winning?

This year's six Booker Prize shortlisted authors were announced on Tuesday evening by the chair of judges, Neil MacGregor.

They include Alan Garner, 88, with *Treacle Walker* – he’s the oldest author ever to be shortlisted – and Claire Keegan with *Small Things Like These*, which at 116 pages is the shortest book – by page number – to be recognised in the prize’s history.

Being shortlisted may not be as life-changing as winning the prize itself, but it certainly ups the game. It’s a label that sticks and although book sales aren’t anything like as enormous as they are if they go on to win – the 2021 winner Damon Galgut’s *The Promise* sold almost 2,000 per cent more in the two weeks after the prize than it had done before it – it’s still significant.

Galgut tells me that winning the prize is “thrilling and numbing. Unreal and terrifying. I’m still coming to terms with it”.

Whereas the shortlist is a “boon and a blessing” and “a good place to be”.

“You feel noticed, but not too much. People see you differently (ie take you more seriously), which is hard to argue with,” he says.



Damon Galgut won the 2021 Booker Prize with ‘The Promise’ (The Booker Prize)

When the Booker Prize winner is announced on 17 October in a ceremony held at London’s Roundhouse, it will be nerve-wracking for the six shortlisted authors – also including NoViolet Bulawayo with *Glory*, Percival Everett with *The Trees*, Shehan Karunatilaka with *The Seven Moons of Maali Almeida*, and Elizabeth Strout with *Oh William!*

“It’s horrible for the six shortlisted authors – unbearable,” says Gaby Wood, the director of the Booker Prize Foundation.

“They have to sit through dinner and wait and see. One year I passed an author at dinner and asked him ‘are you alright?’. He said, ‘yes, can you tell us when we are going to be put out of our misery?’”

She adds: “We try and invite the previous shortlisted nominees to the dinner just so they can enjoy their meal because in the year they were shortlisted it must have been impossible.”

This year’s shortlist was made from 169 novels published between October 2021 and September 2022. The Booker Prize is open to works by writers of any nationality, written in English and published in the UK or Ireland. It’s an arduous task for the five judges who read all the novels over seven months from January to July – “it’s about one day,” says Wood, before they whittle it down to “The Booker Dozen” of 12 or 13 novels.



While most people think the Booker Prize is about the glory, or the cash prize of £50,000 (or £2,500 for each shortlisted author) – and increased book sales – its main aim is to foster a love of reading



The judges met late last week in a private member’s club in Soho to agree on the shortlist – the Booker Prize is a charity and still has no office despite its prestigious reputation. By then, they’ve re-read all the 13 longlisted novels and come “armed with a sense of how those 13 books stand up to second reading” explains Wood. “Often the books become richer, sometimes poorer.”

It's a full-on day of discussions. On MacGregor's suggestion, this year each judge sent their top six to Wood in advance "so there was no prejudice – no one could influence anyone else", says Wood.

"Do any of them rise to the top? Do any of them sink to the bottom? Normally during a process like that, some of them will fall away. But when I got the lists back, every single one of 13 longlisted books were represented in those votes."

At that point, they knew the meeting would be really long. "We thought that the judges would be really distressed to lose the books that they loved. That often happens – it can really painful. You've championed a story for so long and you can't bear to see it go. But that didn't happen."

To help them, the judges this year also physically moved the 13 novels around a table to slot the shortlist into place until they all agreed on the final six.

"Everybody had a go at arranging the books and they all came to a decision that they were happy with." There was no bloodbath – although it remains to be seen how things go when deciding the winner next month.

Luckily, the shortlisted and winning authors are blissfully unaware of what goes on behind the scenes – most of the time.

The Booker isn't without its scandals. In 2019, judges couldn't agree on a winner and flouted the rules by announcing joint winners –

Bernardine Evaristo with *Girl, Woman, Other* and Margaret Atwood, who had won it in 2000 for *The Blind Assassin*, for her new book *The*

Testaments. In 1977, the poet Philip Larkin, who was the Booker Prize chair of judges that year, threatened to jump out of the window if Paul Scott's *Staying On* didn't win. Scott's book did



NoViolet Bulawayo's makes her second Booker Prize shortlist appearance, this time with 'Glory' (Nye' Lyn Tho/The Booker Prize)

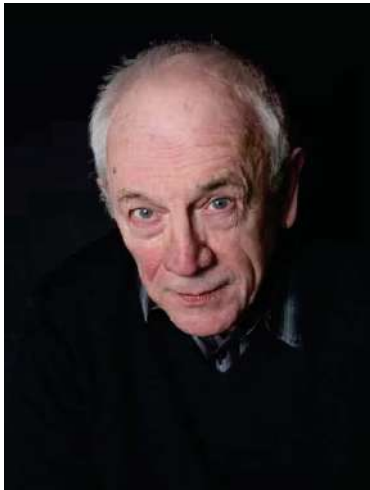
win – although sadly the author died of cancer six months later aged 57.

In 1994, the Booker judge Julia Neuberger pronounced Scotland's first Booker Prize winner James Kelman's novel *How Late It Was, How Late*, "a disgrace".

Wood, who now oversees the prize and has chosen the judges since 2016, was also a judge herself in 2011, when the prize – chaired by Stella Rimington – was heavily criticised for "dumbing down" the Booker.

"A couple of judges had said they were looking for readable books – or novels that zipped along. That was not seen to be a good thing," says Wood. "In practice, Julian Barnes won [with *The Sense of Ending*] and I don't think there was anything dumb about that. It was not a popular year on the outside – but that was my year."

While most people think the Booker Prize is about the glory, or the cash prize of £50,000 (or £2,500 for each shortlisted author) – and of course increased book sales – its main aim is to foster a love of reading.



At 88, Alan Garner is the oldest writer to be shortlisted for the Booker (David Heke/The Booker Prize)

"It doesn't actually make any money. From our point of view, the Booker Prize Foundation is a charity with a purpose to promote the love of literature for the public benefit."

But for the authors, the prize brings its own pressures – as well as ups and downs. "At least the whole next year is spent talking about your book or having won the Booker. There is so much demand on writers at that point," says Wood.

"It's either that they don't particularly feel comfortable with the public life or that they want to get on with their own writing and want to leave that book behind. By the time a book wins the Booker, it's at least a year since they

finished it. Or there could be a lot of pressure to write the next book. Everybody feels it differently. And then some people, who are further along in their careers, are really happy. I think the £50,000 is the least of it to be honest – it's not only the increased sales that are so astronomical, but the book deals with publishers all over the world for the rest of their career."

It's not always rosy to get on the shortlist. The two-time Booker winner Hilary Mantel – a favourite to win in 2020 with the third novel in her Thomas Cromwell trilogy, *The Mirror and the Light*, spoke to the *Sydney Morning Herald* about not making it onto the shortlist that year. "Although disappointing on one level it was quite freeing on one level," she said.

It's understandable. Galgut who like many writers "usually likes spending lots of time on his own," says that has "become almost impossible". "I'm known as somebody who doesn't talk a great deal, and that's had to change too. Essentially, life has become very public and very noisy. I've been negotiating that one day at a time, and there have been moments when that feels overwhelming. But of course, there are profound pleasures along the way. And there will, presumably, be an end to the noise."



How do this year's shortlist stack up? (The Booker Prize)

The Promise was his ninth novel – does he feel he's made it now or does he want to win it again?

"Nobody with serious intentions writes a book with the aim of winning a prize. So the idea of 'making it' doesn't really feature. It's a fabulous acknowledgement, but the writerly part of me is

longing for the space and silence to get back to work. Soon, I hope.”

Winning prizes, he says, doesn’t change the creative process either. “I’ve always found it very hard to write and that hasn’t become easier – or more difficult. In a certain sense, prizes and accolades happen on a different planet to the work itself, which is really a struggle with yourself.”

For the 2019 Booker Prize-winning Evaristo, winning has been nothing but positive.

“It was and still is an amazing experience. I started publishing books in 1994 and it was always a struggle to get attention and break through onto the main stage. When I won the Booker, I arrived in the spotlight and my career was transformed in every way imaginable for the better,” she says.



Focus on developing your craft and reading widely and deeply, and not on winning prizes. They can be a useful and even a career-changing by-product but they should never be the purpose of writing



“I have a solid foundation as a person, a writer and in a creative practice rooted in 40 years working professionally in the arts. My thematic and stylistic compulsions as a writer have not changed. I’ve learned that I can only do my own thing because if I try to write to the perceived expectations of others, I lose my connection to my creativity.”

For most of the shortlisted authors this year, it's a new experience – apart from Zimbabwean author Bulawayo who is on the shortlist a second time with *Glory*, having also made the list in 2013 with *We Need New Names*. What was Bulawayo's reaction this time to being shortlisted?

“I celebrated the news with my amazing team, including my incredible editors, called one of my sisters, who said, ‘well, I guess I have to read the book.’ I must say I love my family in times like these.”

How does she deal well with being in the spotlight as an author? Writers are notoriously reclusive. “I do what I can, but I'd really rather be creating and leave the book to speak for itself,” she says.



In 2019, the prize was shared by Margaret Atwood and Bernardine Evaristo (The Booker Prize)

What is more exciting than the cash prize is “the readers I may not have otherwise reached, the conversations that *Glory* may inspire,” says Bulawayo.

For the octogenarian, Garner, being shortlisted for the Booker Prize was not always on the cards. “When I started out, at three minutes past four on Tuesday, 4 September 1956, the first Booker Prize was 13 years in the future,” he tells me.

Is it nerve-wracking waiting to hear if you made it onto the shortlist? What were you thinking as you waited?

“Writing a book is what wracks the nerves. I was planning the next while I waited.” But what was his reaction to being shortlisted? What was the first thing he did?

“The first thing I felt was delight, on behalf of the book’s achievement and of all the people that have supported me through the 62 years of being published, so far. The first thing I did was to go to bed and sleep.”

If he wins the Booker, Garner, says he would use the Booker Prize cash win of £50,000 to “continue to survive and to write, and to look after the ancient house that has looked after me for the past 65 years”.



Making it onto the shortlist can be a life-changing event
(David Sandison/The Booker Prize)

Keegan – who was shortlisted this year for *Small Things Like These* – says nothing about being nominated worries her in the least.

“I’ve nothing to lose and don’t see how the shortlisting could in any way hinder my future work or writing. It’s a huge honour, simply.” After the news was announced, Keegan walked to the shop to get some milk and returned home to “over a hundred messages/emails had come in on the phone”. “Some of my students were in tears. Others sent photos of themselves with champagne. Still others sent screenshots of the announcement on the 9 o’clock news.”

For her, It wasn’t nerve-wracking waiting for the shortlist announcement, she says. “During August, I was just getting on with life. My mother passed away last month so I’ve been

grieving her memory and clearing out her house on and off ever since. It's been a bittersweet time for I know she would have been very proud to have seen my novel being shortlisted for the Booker Prize. I've found all kinds of newspaper cuttings here about my work over the years. She was a great reader and I'm sure that some of my storytelling abilities came down through her."

What would Keegan do with the £50,000 Booker Prize if she won? "Must we talk about money?," she says. "In many ways, this book is an anti-money novel, a book about someone who chooses the moral right over personal gain. Of course, I'm grateful (as I'm sure all the shortlisted are) to those who have sponsored this year's Booker Prize. It's a hugely generous award but I'm already grateful to them for the £2,500 prize I'll be awarded – which will most likely go towards replacing my 19-year-old jeep. I have to laugh now as Bill, the central character in *Small Things Like These*, drives a lorry which is giving out and failing on him in the end!"

Wood says that "the prize is so well known – the recognisability and the prestige is so high" when she saw Galgut after he'd won last year – she almost felt like apologising. "Obviously he's gone round the world touring with this book and it's exhausting. This is what happens to people – they can't write anything for a whole year after winning the Booker Prize. And he said: 'It's ok. It's all for a good cause.' And I said, 'what your book?' And he said 'no, reading.'"



Claire Keegan's 'anti-money' novel 'Small Things Like These' made it to the shortlist this year (Frederic Stucin/The Booker Prize)

What advice would a Booker winner give a struggling author who wants to win the Booker one day?

"Focus on developing your craft and reading widely and deeply, and not on winning prizes," says Evaristo. "They can be a useful and even a career-changing by-product but they should never be the purpose of writing. Writing to win prizes lacks creative

integrity and is a waste of energy. Who can predict jury decisions?” Galgut adds: “Seriously? There’s no advice that will help you win anything, except the injunction to write as well as you can. Leaving the Booker out of it, my advice to struggling authors is to keep on struggling. It’s the only way to get a little better at what we do.”

*The Booker Prize 2022 is announced on 17 October;
thebookerprizes.com*

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Section 2/ Ask Simon Calder



What are your tips for a trip to Barbados on the cheap?



Sunrise in Barbados: there are worse times to visit the island than August (Simon Calder)

Q We are off to Barbados for our 30th wedding anniversary next August. It's a budget trip, and we want to go room-only and do self-catering. Any particularly nice areas? We need affordable shops and restaurants nearby.

Chris S

A Congratulations on your 30th anniversary, and how lovely that you have a special trip planned. To be honest, Barbados in August would be far from my first choice. It's the height of the hurricane season; you could choose from a thousand nearer, cheaper and equally delightful locations; and budget travel to Barbados is tricky at any time of the year.

But conversely, you can see visiting the island in August as a positive, with no crowds: the cruise ships are busy in Europe and return to the Caribbean only with the arrival of the dry season in late November/early December. So there will be no daily influx of thousands of daytrippers.

The south coast of the island, around St Lawrence Gap between the capital Bridgetown and the airport, is the area to aim for. I like staying at the friendly and good-value Crystal Waters guest house. In terms of eating and drinking: Bridgetown (accessible by cheap, frequent local buses) is the best place to pick up supplies for picnics etc. In the evenings, the fish-frying shacks at nearby Oistins are excellent value. For a special night out, try the well-regarded Pisces restaurant in St Lawrence Gap.

You can explore the island by bus; no need to rent a car or take taxis.

Remember the Barbadian currency is locked to America's (at B\$2 = US\$1), so costs are likely to be challenging. The pound has lost 15 per cent of its value against the US dollar so far this year, and many economists say it has further to go.

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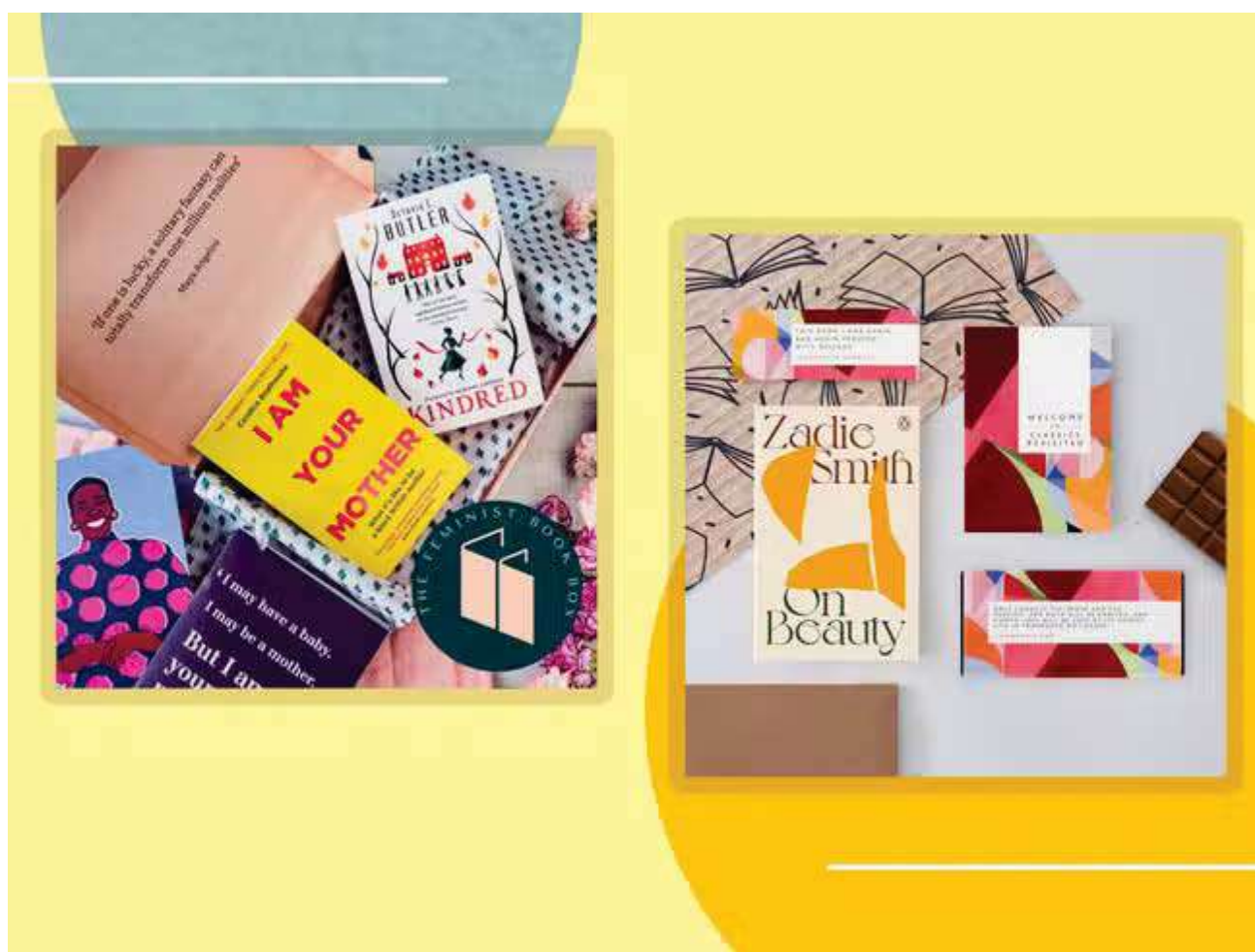
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BACK TO TOP **A**



PAGES IN THE POST

Siobhan Grogan tries out the best book subscription boxes



We would all love to find the time to read more, but it can be hard to find new books and new authors to fall in love with. So what could be better than a book subscription box?

These monthly packages do all the leg work for you, all you need to do is select your favourite genre anywhere between feminist fiction and YA novels, then sit back and wait for the perfect book

to arrive on your doorstep. They make the perfect present too, especially for someone who seems to have everything or anyone whose taste you may be unsure of.

Most also add reading-related extras such as bookmarks or postcards and invites to exclusive author Q&As or online discussions to chat about the month's book. Some even include extra treats if you're looking to really spoil someone, including bars of gourmet chocolate, beauty products and even bottles of wine.

Although some subscriptions concentrate on classic books and bestsellers, most offer the perfect opportunity to discover new titles or authors. In all cases, it's worth double checking before buying that the company allows you to swap the book if you're ever sent one you have already read.

Luckily, it's not necessary to commit to a full year either. Most boxes are available as one-off gifts, rolling subscriptions or shorter plans of three or six months. It's a great way to try a subscription first before you commit to a longer plan to make sure the books appeal. In nearly all cases, rolling subscriptions and one-off boxes work out slightly more expensive than longer-term subscriptions so we have included the cheapest possible price in our results, usually for a 12-month plan.

How we tested

We ripped open the packaging on all sorts of book subscription boxes and got stuck into reading. For each one, we judged the choice of books, the extra insights offered into the work or author, the subscription's flexibility, price and any extra treats included in the box. Most of all, we considered if we'd be thrilled to receive the box as a present and if it was something we'd look forward to receiving every month. Read on to find out more...



Happily Ever After Book Box book and pamper subscription box: £15, Happily Ever After Book Box

Best: Overall book subscription box

Rating: 10/10

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Subscriptions are sent out each month and there is no minimum term for ordering so you can cancel any time for maximum flexibility. A donation is also made to local animal rescue organisations with every subscription ordered. There's no chance of being stuck with a book you'll hate either. You can either choose a book from the "hot list" each month or select your favourite genre to guarantee every book will appeal. Options include romance and chick lit, sci-fi and fantasy, and non-fiction, or opt for a surprise each time.

Every book comes with a vegan chocolate treat, beauty product, bookmark and a choice of hot drink – ours included two Taylors

tea bags, a large bar of Danny's Oat Milk dark chocolate and a generous tub of Bubble T body butter. It's a lovely package to receive each month and we'd happily buy it for everyone we know. We also rate the YA book subscription box (£15, Happilyeverafterbookbox.co.uk), which contains all the same treats as the adult's box but with a YA fiction book and is now our go-to present for tricky-to-buy-for teens.

Buy now



Tea Time Bookshop Bestseller book subscription box: £13.99, Tea Time Bookshop

Best: Book subscription box for relaxing

Rating: 8/10

There's nothing better than sitting down with a good book and a cuppa, and Tea Time Bookshop does all the hard work for you. Available as a one-time purchase, a monthly pay-as-you-go or as three, six or 12-month subscriptions, the box can include either one or two books but only the most popular titles are included. Authors might include Maggie O'Farrell or Matt Haig, making this box a great way to keep up with the books everyone's talking about. Other subscriptions are also available including crime and thrillers, historical fiction and children's books.

Ours featured *Still Life* by Sarah Winman, a beautifully written love story that made us yearn for sunny days in Tuscany. That's not the only treat in the recycled packaging either. Every subscription also comes with ethically sourced tea, coffee or hot chocolate, a bookmark and a snack-sized packet of biscuits – delicious double chocolate chip ones in our case. It's a lovely way to treat a friend who's always rushed off their feet and send them a well-deserved tea break from afar. The bookshop will even plant a tree with every new book subscription ordered to make this the ultimate feel-good gift.

Buy now



**Words With Wine monthly wine and book subscription box:
£25, Words With Wine**

Best: Book subscription box for wine lovers

Rating: 9/10

The UK's first wine and book subscription club, Words With Wine, was created during lockdown when its founder Anna Smith missed the separate book and wine clubs she used to attend. This subscription aims to encourage recipients to try different wines and read new genres they may not necessarily

choose for themselves, while supporting new authors, independent suppliers and small wine regions.

Subscriptions can be monthly or bi-monthly or ordered as a one-time purchase. Every box comes with a new – usually fiction – book and a full-size bottle of wine to complement the book. It's possible to select alcoholic or non-alcoholic wine at the point of ordering and subscriptions also include membership to an online club to chat with other readers with the same book and wine.

Our box included a lip-smacking, citrusy white rioja plus a copy of *If I Had Your Face*, the compelling debut novel by Frances Cha which tells the story of four young women's struggles in South Korea. We especially liked the accompanying cards that told us more about both the author and the wine including a food pairing suggestion, and it felt gloriously indulgent receiving both together.

Buy now



Rare Birds Book Club: £14, Rare Birds Books

Best: Online book club

Rating: 8/10

Rare Birds Books was born when founder Rachel Wood realised she was constantly recommending books to people. She started an online book club that would take women's writing seriously but allow books to be read for fun. The club now has thousands of members across 23 countries and even opened its own IRL bookstore in August 2021 in Edinburgh, Scotland's only bookshop dedicated to women's writing.

It couldn't be easier to subscribe. Pay monthly or for three, six or 12 months and Rare Birds will find the very best new books around, then send two secret blurbs each month for you to choose the one you fancy. The title stays secret until the book arrives, wrapped in Rare Birds Books tissue paper and includes a themed bookmark.

Ours was the beautifully haunting yet curiously hilarious *Sorrow and Bliss* by Meg Mason, which the book club correctly advised was "perfect for fans of *Fleabag* and *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine*." We raced through it in no time and could then sign up to Rare Birds' members portal, which features private event listings, recommended half-price books, author interviews and the chance to chat with other readers about the month's choice. It's all the fun of a book club without having to share snacks or leave your own living room.

Buy now



Bookishly Classics Revisited book and chocolate subscription box: £18, Bookishly

Best: Book subscription box for treating someone

Rating: 9/10

You'll feel like it's your birthday every month if you sign up for this lovely-looking subscription from Bookishly. Available as a one-off purchase or for three or six months, every package comes gift-wrapped in stylish paper for an extra doorstep thrill.

Inside, there's a modern book based on or inspired by literature's best-loved classics plus a bookmark and generous bar of artisan handmade chocolate, featuring a quote from the classic book that started it all. It's an innovative take on a book subscription and a great way to link two works of fiction and encourage reading beyond the book sent.

We received Zadie Smith's powerful *On Beauty*, loosely based on EM Forster's *Howards End*, and a delicious bar of salted caramel milk chocolate made by Scotland's Quirky Chocolate that we wolfed down in no time. It's the perfect partnership that would make a delightful gift for anyone.

Buy now



The Feminist Book Box subscription: £20, The Feminist Book Box

Best: Book subscription box for feminist authors

Rating: 8/10

For books that truly pack a punch, this subscription from a collective of feminist book lovers who work for publishing house Hachette won't disappoint. Subscriptions can be for three, six or 12 months but every box includes two books from feminist writers, a fascinating mini-magazine about each book featured, a specially commissioned piece of art on a postcard and access to an exclusive monthly event with one of the authors.

Books can be by household names or new talent and might be novels, poetry or non-fiction, so an open mind is a bonus as recipients are truly surprised each month. Authors featured could include the likes of Candice Brathwaite and Maggie O'Farrell, but our box included two books about women in areas of conflict in Afghanistan and Ukraine.

My Pen is the Wing of a Bird is an anthology of short fiction by Afghan women, while Żanna Słoniowska's *The House with the Stained-Glass Window* tells the captivating story of four generations of women living under the same roof. We likely wouldn't have read either without this subscription and loved the chance to dive into books that were completely new to us.

Buy now



The Travelling Reader book subscription box: £34.99, The Travelling Reader

Best: Book subscription box for wow factor

Rating: 9/10

We were bowled over when we opened this weighty box from The Travelling Reader. Beyond the tissue paper, every box includes a nicely wrapped fiction book based on a different British destination each month and can be bought as a one-off or monthly subscription. Ours was a copy of Wendy Holden's *The Duchess*, which offers a fictional look at the life of Wallis Simpson and is set largely in Berkshire at locations including Windsor and Fort Belvedere in Windsor Great Park.

But that's not all. The box also includes everything else you'll need to truly set the scene for uninterrupted reading including all-British drinks, snacks and gifts from the region of that month's pick. In our case, that was Windsor. Ours featured a box of tea from Darvilles, the oldest established company in the town, and a box of quintessentially English clotted cream fudge made by Fudge Kitchen. There was also a notepad featuring a painting of Windsor Castle by artist Dave Thompson, a useful

map of the town and a generously sized tube of hand cream from Woods of Windsor, plus an exclusive bookmark and a letter from the author. We especially loved the extra photos added throughout the book featuring locations mentioned so we could really imagine the story in situ.

Buy now



A Box of Stories Young Adult Book subscription box: £24.99, A Box of Stories

Best: Book subscription box for teens

Rating: 8/10

If you're desperate for inspiration for a tricky teen, this fantastic subscription box takes the pain out of present buying. A Box of Stories say that 200,000 titles are published in the UK each year but only 17 per cent make the bestsellers list, leaving many of the others ignored and unread. The company promises to unearth undiscovered gems and deliver them to your door as a one-off or a regular subscription. You can pause or cancel any time, select genres you definitely don't want to include and will receive a box of four brand-new books each month. There's even an extra book included in every third box.

Our box included coming of age story *A Constellation of Roses* by Miranda Asebedo, the pacey *From What I Remember* by Stacy Kramer and Valerie Thomas, zombie thriller *Dread Nation* by Justina Ireland and the intriguing *The Summer We All Ran Away* by Cassandra Parkin. Our teen was delighted with the haul and said she'd love to look forward to this arriving every month. Fancy a treat yourself? The company's science fiction and fantasy box is one of their best-sellers with adults (£24.99, [A Box of Stories](#)).

[Buy now](#)

The verdict

All these boxes make a delightful present that would brighten anyone's day and are a great way to discover new writers yourself. We love the range of genres and extra treats offered by the [Happily Ever After Book Box book and pamper box](#). And any budding traveller will be charmed by the bumper package that arrives with [The Original Travelling Reader subscription](#). However, if you just fancy something new to read each month, go straight for the [Rare Birds Book Club](#).

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Section 2

ON THIS DAY



Jim Clark, here in Oulton Park in 1963, became the world's youngest motor racing champion (PA)

1087: William the Conqueror died in Rouen, France, from injuries received when his horse stumbled while he was fighting the King of France. William Rufus (Red Rufus), third son of William the Conqueror, came to the throne of England.

1513: The Battle of Flodden Field was fought near Branxton in Northumberland, in which James IV of Scotland was defeated

and killed by English troops under Thomas Howard, Earl of Surrey.

1754: William Bligh, captain of the *Bounty*, was born. He sailed around the world on Cook's second voyage before taking command of his own ship in 1787. The infamous mutiny in 1789 was not the end of his career – he became governor of New South Wales in 1805.

1835: Modern local government came into being with the British Municipal Corporations Act.

1901: French painter Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec died after suffering a second stroke.

1963: Scotland's Jim Clark became the world's youngest motor racing champion.

1976: Mao Zedong (Chairman Mao) died aged 82 after a series of strokes.

On this day last year: Two teachers in England made the shortlist for the world's "best teacher" award which included prize money of \$1m.

Birthdays

Tom Wopat, actor, 71; **Angela Cartwright**, actor, 70; **Dave Stewart**, musician, 70; **Hugh Grant**, actor, 62; **Adam Sandler**, actor and comedian, 56; **Julia Sawalha**, actor, 54; **Henry Thomas**, actor, 51; **Eric Stonestreet**, actor, 51; **Goran Visnjic**, actor, 50; **Michelle Williams**, actor, 42.

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Feuds, affairs and mayhem

The media frenzy around ‘Don’t Worry Darling’ is nothing new, writes **Geoffrey Macnab**, as he looks back at other films where production troubles became the defining story



The ‘Don’t Worry Darling’ cast at the Venice Film Festival premiere on Monday (Invision)

They faced the world’s media looking like furtive teenagers who had been caught doing something very naughty on a school camping trip. When Olivia Wilde and cast members from her new film *Don’t Worry Darling* gave a press conference in Venice earlier this week, it was a toe-curling affair for all concerned. What should have been a moment of celebration turned into an ordeal. Pop star turned actor Harry Styles, well accustomed to

tabloid scrutiny, writhed uncomfortably. Chris Pine stared downward. Wilde smiled grimly.

Wilde's dystopian sci-fi thriller has been the most hotly debated film in the festival which ends this weekend. The focus, though, hasn't been on the performances or the daring of the director's aesthetic choices. Instead, everyone has been talking about the mayhem behind the scenes – the alleged affair between Wilde and her leading man Styles, simmering tensions between cast members, disputes over pay and status, and just why the star Florence Pugh didn't turn up at the press conference.

It was fitting that the film screened shortly before the Venice Festival premiere of Andrew Dominik's *Blonde*, his biopic of Marilyn Monroe based on the Joyce Carol Oates book about the star. After all, Monroe, played by Ana De Armas, was involved in many Hollywood productions which were even more fraught behind the scenes than *Don't Worry Darling*. Monroe was a victim of the Hollywood system. She was used, abused, and then spat out by the studios but when she was on a film set, she invariably left chaos in her wake.

"She was perfectly un-punctual. She never came on time once... you could always count on her – to be late," Billy Wilder told biographer Charlotte Chandler after working with Monroe on *The Seven Year Itch* and *Some Like it Hot*.

Monroe drove her co-stars and director to distraction. She would stay in her trailer for hours on end while everyone else was ready to shoot. Tony Curtis remembered that when he was dressed in drag on *Some Like it Hot*, Monroe kept him waiting for hours at a time he was wearing high heels and a metal jock-strap that made it impossible to pee. He, therefore, "rigged up a funnel and hose" that allowed him to "relieve myself without going to the John". Curtis had had an affair with Monroe but still made his cheap, notorious quip that in the romantic scenes with her, it was like "kissing Hitler".

In Monroe's case, Wilder always insisted that it "was worth the agony of working with her" because the results were ultimately

so spectacular. “She wouldn’t know her lines. Terrible. Then, on the 30th take, she would say it like no one else ever could.”

Monroe’s antics were just an extreme version of what happens on almost every film set – not just *Don’t Worry Darling* or *Some Like it Hot*. This is nothing new in the film world, even if we don’t always hear about it. Beautiful, well-paid actors with big egos cooped up together a long way from home will often have affairs, start feuds and spend their spare time drinking themselves into a stupor, or, like Monroe, hide away in their trailers.



There were signs of a feud between ‘Don’t Worry Darling’ star Florence Pugh and director Olivia Wilde (Getty)

“People are very difficult in films... always!” Oscar-winning producer Jeremy Thomas once told me. “Everybody behaves badly – or most people behave badly. You make allowances for that...if you’re going to take umbrage with everybody who is difficult in the movies, you’re going to have no friends left in the world.”

Boredom can lead actors on set to behave in very bizarre fashion. In his 2002 memoir, *You’re Only as Good as Your Next One*, Hollywood producer Mike Medavoy writes in detail about the epic “war of pranks” between Sean Penn and Woody Harrelson during the making of Terrence Malick’s war epic *The Thin Red Line*. They were shooting in the Solomon Islands and

in the remote outback of Australia. Penn started matters off by posting fliers all over town advertising a “Woody Harrelson Day” during which Harrelson would sign autographs for \$10 each.

Hundreds turned up from far and wide for his signature. Harrelson responded with an elaborately choreographed prank of his own which ended with Penn fleeing for his life, convinced the cops were about to shoot him. Harrelson filmed his fellow actor at his moment of maximum terror and then taunted him with the image. Penn upped the ante yet further with his next gambit, leaving Harrelson “stranded in the rainforest in the middle of the night with no food, no water, and no way home, except on foot”. It was only a 40-mile hike back to the set.



Marilyn Monroe and Tony Curtis on the set of ‘Some Like It Hot’ in 1959 (Moviestore/Shutterstock)

Harrelson and Penn were supposedly friends. Their antics were fun and games, albeit with an edge. There have been plenty of other instances in which actors have detested one another. The movie sets then become battle arenas.

Joan Crawford and Bette Davis were in the twilight of their careers when they were cast together in Robert Aldrich’s *What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?* (1962). Davis played Baby Jane Hudson, the former child actor who takes a sadistic pleasure in tormenting her wheelchair-bound sister Blanche (Crawford).

When Davis kicks and thumps Crawford on camera, she doesn't hold back.

What Ever Happened to Baby Jane? was built on malice and cruelty – and it worked. The two stars gave grotesque, self-parodic performances but audiences, who knew all about their mutual loathing, lapped it up. The real-life enmity between Davis and Crawford turned into one of the film's biggest marketing hooks.



Best of enemies: Bette Davis and Joan Crawford in 'What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?' (Moviestore/Shutterstock)

It's a lesson Warner Bros can learn from when releasing *Don't Worry Darling*. A little mayhem and controversy on set can boost the profile of a movie, especially when all the gruesome details are leaked in the media. Styles and Pine aren't exactly Crawford and Davis but spitting on your rival at your film's premiere, as Styles is alleged to have done, is straight from the Baby Jane playbook, although sources close to Styles told *The Independent* that the spitting claims weren't true

On the bright side, cinema history also shows that the most troubled productions are sometimes also the most successful. From Francis Ford Coppola seemingly going mad in the Philippines while making *Apocalypse Now* to James Cameron

struggling to finish *Titanic* on time, chaos doesn't necessarily mean disaster.

The Wizard of Oz wasn't an easy film to shoot. "They were little drunks ... They got smashed every night, and they picked them up in butterfly nets," complained Judy Garland about the disruptive behaviour off duty of the "little people" who played the Munchkins in the land of Oz. *Gone with The Wind* had its behind-the-scenes spats too. Directors were fired, actors were having affairs, there were nervous breakdowns and Black cast members were discriminated against. Both, though, were among the biggest hits in Hollywood history.

Steven Spielberg's *Jaws* was a famously troubled production. The lead actors Richard Dreyfuss and Robert Shaw goaded each other relentlessly, the shark model didn't work properly, and the production ran over time and budget. It turned into a huge success and ushered in a new age of summer blockbusters.



'The Thin Red Line' set saw an epic war of pranks between Sean Penn and Woody Harrelson (Moviestore/Shutterstock)

Books like Peter Biskind's *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls* and Julia Phillips's *You'll Never Eat Lunch in this Town Again* suggest that no self-respecting director in the 1970s would even conceive of making a film unless it had its full share of meltdowns, sexual shenanigans, drug taking and brawling going on behind the scenes. Filmmakers like Coppola, William Friedkin, and Martin Scorsese used all the turmoil to get their creative juices running.

Illicit on-set affairs are common and don't necessarily torpedo a movie. Long before Styles hooked up with Wilde on *Don't Worry Darling*, Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor, both already married, scandalised and titillated the world's media with their romance during the shooting of *Cleopatra* (1963). This was a famously troubled production that took years to complete. It was dubbed "the biggest flop in movie history" with a budget in today's figures, equivalent to around \$350m. It almost bankrupted 20th Century Fox. Nonetheless, the Egyptian epic eventually earned its money back.

Burton and Taylor were also ultimately very good for the box office. Styles and Wilde doesn't yet have the same ring. A key difference between *Don't Worry Darling* and all those other movies in which pandemonium has ruled behind the scenes is that it was made in the online era.

"As for all the endless tabloid gossip and all the noise out there, I mean, the internet feeds itself. I don't feel the need to contribute. I think it's sufficiently well-nourished," Wilde stated during Monday's Venice press conference. However, actor Shia LaBeouf's email to the director, referring to his firing from the movie as "attractive clickbait", implied that Wilde was busy fanning the gossip herself to ensure her film was noticed. She had told trade paper *Variety* that LaBeouf's "combative energy" wasn't "conducive to the best performances" or to the "safe, trusting environment" she wanted to create on set. In hindsight, her words seem highly ironic.



Affair to remember: Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor during the shooting of 1963's 'Cleopatra' (Getty)

Of course, the current online hysteria is in keeping with the film's subject matter. This is a story about an alternative reality in which the protagonists refuse to live in the "real" world. By immersing themselves in the gossip and ignoring the actual movie, journalists and fans are behaving in exactly the same way as the characters in the film trying to escape into their own dream existence.

It no longer really matters whether all those toxic stories leaking out about the production are true. *Don't Worry Darling* is one of those films in which the drama off-camera is infinitely more compelling than anything we see on screen. Regardless of how it performs at the box office when it's released later this month, it has already provided the biggest movie soap opera of the year.

'Don't Worry Darling' is released on 23 Sept. The Venice Festival runs until tomorrow

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Section 2/ TV review

SAME OLD, SAME OLD

There are charming moments in new BBC series 'Stuck', but its niceness starts to feel tired quickly, writes **Isobel Lewis**



Domestic bliss? Dylan Moran and Morgana Robinson take centre stage (BBC)

★★☆☆☆

Google, it is reported, offers employees gourmet dining experiences on its campus. Apple, meanwhile, hired Stevie Wonder to play for its workforce. If the BBC is considering

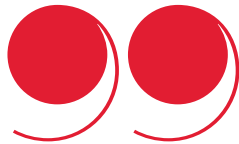
introducing a new employee perk to energise its staff, I'd like to suggest complementary couples counselling. After the critically acclaimed misery of Stefan Golaszewski's *Marriage* last month, comes the lighter companion piece, *Stuck*, a sitcom about the claustrophobia of cohabitation.

Dylan Moran is Dan, a recently laid-off jingle writer struggling to get his life back on track. Morgana Robinson is his long-term partner, Carla, some sort of new age therapist, pushed into looking after this man, who is a decade her senior. "Is this it?" she asks him. "Just me, flat out, and you farting about like an old fart?" Moran is on safe ground, doing Moran things (he is the show's creator, after all). He pairs a world-weary cynicism with a skittish energy, not dissimilar to the performance he perfected in *Black Books*. Robinson continues her conquest of the small screen, following *Newark, Newark*, with a role that doesn't extend her especially far beyond her obvious comedic talents.

The stickiness of the title is a reference both to how relationships create a feeling of entrapment ("Without me, you'd be in jail" Dan says; "I am in jail!" Carla replies) and a supportive dependence. In that sense, it's a classic bittersweet portrayal. The bitterness comes from the crumbs of daily frustration ("You've hidden the good chocolate chip cookies!" Dan rages, shouting about biscuits he has clearly eaten). The sweetness comes, primarily, from Carla's blind support of her partner. "Why didn't you tell me straight away?" she asks when he finally confesses he's been fired. "Lying's more manly," he replies meekly.



If we were in a period of envelope-pushing British comedy, perhaps it could be forgiven for its lightweight, almost vapid, inoffensiveness



I can't imagine there were many people who felt the tried-and-tested 20-minute sitcom format needed further truncation, but after *Cheaters* earlier this year, which comprised a set of 10-minute episodes, the BBC returns, with *Stuck*, to this new diminutive length. Running for just five of these micro-episodes, *Stuck* could be watched as an hour-long film about a woman asking her partner to buy her a cat. These easily digestible chunks can fit into even the busiest of schedules (lunch break at a company that's working you too hard, for example, or halftime at the football) but the brevity renders character development, and all but the most fleeting of supporting appearances, impossible.

Stuck is fine. It has plenty of charming moments and some chuckle-worthy (if not laugh-out-loud) jokes. And if we were in a period of envelope-pushing British comedy, perhaps it could be forgiven for its lightweight, almost vapid, inoffensiveness. But so much of comedy right now feels concerned with the concerns of a middle-class milieu, that this niceness starts to feel like laziness. What the show presents as "truths" have, through cultural insistence, become "truisms". Yes, men promise to mend things and then don't deliver. Sure, there's nothing more irritating than your partner's morning alarm. Of course, your siblings-in-law have the perfect lifestyles. We all live with the

same frustrations; the mistake is to conflate observing them, for the millionth time, with profundity.

“You’re so old,” Carla whispers lovingly to Dan, in bed. “I bet you’ve got a blue plaque over your wang.” That sort of savage affection is as close as *Stuck* comes to originality. But overall, it is just another depiction of a middle-aged, heterosexual couple living through the needling anxieties of modern life. At its best, it might pass the time it takes for the kettle to boil or the toast to brown; at its worst, it might push a few more marriages a step closer to divorce.

The first episode of ‘Stuck’ is available on iPlayer

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Section 2/ Film reviews



RUNNING THE GAMUT

Gen Z slasher flick 'Bodies Bodies Bodies' is funny and merciless, writes **Clarisse Loughrey**. Plus other releases



Maria Bakalova, Amandla Stenberg, Myha'la Herrold and Rachel Sennott in 'Bodies Bodies Bodies' (Gwen Capistran/A24)

★★★★☆

Dir: Halina Reijn. Starring: Amandla Stenberg, Maria Bakalova, Myha'la Herrold, Chase Sui Wonders, Rachel Sennott, Lee Pace, Pete Davidson. 15, 94 minutes.

Bodies Bodies Bodies is a slasher flick written in Generation Z code – blase, bitter, and bloody. A small coven of recent college graduates meet at the manor home of one of their parents, all waiting out an incoming hurricane. They are the newly sober Sophie (Amandla Stenberg), her best friend David (Pete Davidson), David’s actress girlfriend Emma (Chase Sui Wonders), the friend group parent Jordan (Myha’la Herrold), and Alice (Rachel Sennott), who describes her recently launched podcast as like “hanging out with your smartest, funniest friend”.

Then, a round of a murder mystery party game called *Bodies Bodies Bodies* – not unlike *Mafia* – ends with a real corpse out on the patio. The ensuing mayhem triggers an apocalyptic crisis of the ego, where personal slights blow up into Judas-worthy betrayals and the last vestiges of honest emotion are swallowed up by Twitter buzzwords. “Don’t call her a psychopath, that’s, like, so ableist.” “Creative non-fiction is a valid response in an attention economy.” “You hate-listen to her podcast.” Is *Bodies Bodies Bodies* just another scornful put-down of the incoming generation by their demographic elders? None of the film’s creative team – Dutch filmmaker Halina Reijn, screenwriter Sarah DeLappe, and author Kristen Roupenian (behind the viral short story “Cat Person”) – belong to Gen Z. You could argue that they don’t really have the authority to speak on behalf of those they portray.

But *Bodies Bodies Bodies* is damn funny, often deliriously so, like when Davidson aggressively delivers the line, “I just look like I fuckk. That’s the vibe I like to put out there.” And if there’s any sense of moral condemnation to the film, it’s aimed not so much at Gen Z themselves, but at the idea that any generation is really all that elevated from the next. The language may change, but the rage remains the same. As a prelude to each round of the *Bodies Bodies Bodies* game, the characters sit around in a circle and slap each other in the face as hard as they can. That’s what passes as group therapy for these people.

It’s peak nihilistic entertainment, watching these souls try, in vain, to keep their fragile reputations intact while they’re drenched head to toe in blood. There’s a scene where Jordan, the

self-appointed mediator of the group, tries to de-escalate the situation while waving a meat cleaver in the air. As always, their body language gives them away. That chaos is thrillingly replicated by Jasper Wolf's cinematography, with glow stick bracelets and iPhone flashlights the only things that guide us through the hungry dark.

Sennott, building off her breakout role in 2020's equally merciless *Shiva Baby*, is the film's real comedic gem. There's an exquisite hollowness to the little "yay" she lets out in response to the revelation that Sophie's fresh out of rehab. But *Bodies Bodies Bodies* ultimately works because Reijn offers multiple levels within this out-sized parody, as best demonstrated through the party's two unexpected guests. One is Alice's significantly older, performatively cool date Greg. He's played by Lee Pace with the exact kind of goofiness needed for a guy who thinks it's impressive to open a champagne bottle with a Gurkha sword.

The other, Sophie's new girlfriend Bee (Maria Bakalova), is the only person here not drowning in privilege, and the closest thing *Bodies Bodies Bodies* has to a rootable protagonist. The couple are introduced mid-makeout session, wrapped up in tender, dizzy affection. But surprise, surprise – even their love turns out to be a deep-rooted sham. No one's truly innocent here. Not Gen Z. Not the audience. And for anyone who doesn't see even the faintest degree of their own fickleness projected onto these characters? They may be lying to themselves.

'Bodies Bodies Bodies' is in cinemas from 9 September

A playful play on a... play



Saoirse Ronan in 'See How They Run' (Parisa Taghizadeh/Searchlight Pictures)

★★★☆☆

Dir: Tom George. Starring: Sam Rockwell, Saoirse Ronan, Adrien Brody, Ruth Wilson, Reece Shearsmith, Harris Dickinson, David Oyelowo. 12A, 98 minutes.

Could the all-star whodunnit finally save us from the monotony of superheroes? That's the tantalising promise embedded in *See How They Run*, which may feel as cynically constructed as any of Marvel's corporate-minded affairs, but goes down as sweet and light as a fondant fancy. It's an equal-parts concoction of Rian Johnson's wry, self-aware *Knives Out* and the aristocratic romanticism of Kenneth Branagh's Agatha Christie adaptations. And if its ambitions towards broad likeability weren't already obvious enough, the film's caked in the Wes Anderson aesthetic – obsessive symmetry, bright palettes, French New Wave-inspired camera trickery. You also have to wonder whether the presence of two of his regulars – Saoirse Ronan and Adrien Brody – means they themselves weren't wickedly deceived into signing their contracts. Are they aware this isn't actually a follow-up to *The French Dispatch*?

But, somehow – and almost against odds – *See How They Run* is a real pleasure to consume. If the appeal of the Marvel universe can be whittled down to a feeling of familiarity and stability in

unwieldy times, then there's not much that separates it from the legacy of Christie and her many successors. Both are rooted in a reassurance that justice can be restored and mayhem tamed. Christie wrote under the shadow of war, and the crime genre has always waxed and waned in accordance with our collective feelings of security. *See How They Run* follows all the rigorous codes of the genre: a dead body and a detective (or two); a colourful assortment of suspects; answers provided in neat, monologue form.

The deceased, in this case, is discovered plonked onto a prop couch centre stage at The Ambassadors Theatre in London's West End, where Christie's *The Mousetrap* has just completed its 100th performance. The film mentions the real-life contract clause that bars a film adaptation from being made until the show's run has ended – the grand joke of it all being that *The Mousetrap* is now the longest-running play in the world, still active at the St Martin's next door (minus its brief, Covid-related closure). Inspector Stoppard (Sam Rockwell), with the assistance of rookie constable Stalker (Ronan), are on the case. The pickings of would-be murderers are rich, since they include some of *The Mousetrap*'s original cast, Richard Attenborough (Harris Dickinson) and Sheila Sim (Pearl Chanda).

See How They Run marks the directorial debut of Tom George, the man behind all three seasons of the BBC mockumentary *This Country*. He's carried over the same ethos here – hand a strong cast a set of well-defined characters and let them run wild (series stars Charlie Cooper and Paul Chahidi also crop up). It's the sort of ensemble film that plays like a tennis match, as David Oyelowo's ostentatious screenwriter lobs one-liners at Sian Clifford's brittle producer's wife, who lobs one-liners at Dickinson's luvvie-ish Attenborough. Ronan, however, ultimately comes out on top. She plays Stalker's eager naivety with the same kind of gentle slapstick quality of a baby deer wobbling around on its legs for the first time.

As pure elevator pitch, *See How They Run* does admittedly come off a little trite. To copy Wes Anderson without also indulging in his profound sense of melancholy makes it no better a homage

than an Instagram post of a satchel bag and a beret. But the film's so plain in its ambitions – in its sense of giddy, well-intentioned fun – that it feels a little pointless to scorn its more superficial choices.

The same could easily be said of all its knowing winks to the camera. Brody's Leo Kopernick, a film director who serves as the story's narrator, introduces the tale with a broad evisceration of the murder mystery genre: "You've seen one, you've seen them all". But there's no air of smugness to this gambit. Mark Chappell's script playfully indulges in the very same contrivances that it parodies. Oyelowo's character bemoans flashback sequences in movies as "the last resort of a moribund imagination" – in the middle of a flashback. When it comes to *See How They Run*, spotting the puppet's strings is very much part of the pleasure.

'See How They Run' is in cinemas from 9 September

Clunky S&M kitsch



Viggo Mortensen in 'Crimes of the Future' (Vertigo)

★★★☆☆

Dir: David Cronenberg. Starring: Viggo Mortensen, Lea Seydoux, Kristen Stewart, Don McKellar, Scott Speedman. 18, 108 mins.

A little boy is having his supper. He munches away happily on a plastic bin in the bathroom. This is one of the typically disconcerting early scenes in Canadian body horror maestro David Cronenberg's very grotesque new film. This kid has the uncanny ability to digest plastic. He has been created that way as an experiment into whether humanity can start feeding on its own industrial waste.

Crimes of the Future shares a title with a film Cronenberg made way back near the start of his career, in 1970. It has all the traits that fans look for in its director's work, full of provocative ideas and very lurid imagery. But the storytelling is cold and detached. At times, the narrative is hard to follow. This isn't at all a smooth ride.

Back in 1996, Cronenberg's JG Ballard adaptation *Crash* was a succes de scandale at Cannes, provoking walkouts and absurdly censorious reviews from British critics, accusing the director of moral depravity. At this year's festival in May, there were one or two walkouts during the film's first press screening, but the audience response was relatively muted. No one was taken by surprise when surgical needles and blades began penetrating and cutting human flesh, or scooping out body parts. They'd been well warned in advance.

Viggo Mortensen stars as performance artist Saul Tenser. Early on, he is brought out of a long slumber by his beautiful and mysterious assistant, Caprice (Lea Seydoux). He's a little stiff and weary – a Merlin-like Magus in a black cape who speaks in a growl. Saul likes to get new organs inserted into his body, to see if they grow or simply turn cancerous. His performances involve him having the new growths removed in front of an audience.

Something is going wrong with evolution. Humans no longer feel pain. We're in a world in which, as one character puts it, "surgery is the new sex". Two investigators at the National Organ Registry – played in arch fashion by Kristen Stewart and Don McKellar – are intrigued by Saul's experiments in re-moulding and manipulating his body. Timlin (Stewart) is very attracted to Saul but, as he tells her during one of the film's most absurd scenes, he is "not very good at the old sex". Characters

here get their kicks by licking at open wounds, not by kissing or cuddling.

In its lesser moments, *Crimes of the Future* is clunky and very close to self-parody. The film's best scenes tend to be its most extreme ones, such as the ritualistic autopsy of a child, whose body is stripped open, his strangely shaped innards removed and placed delicately on trays.

The general mood of eeriness is enhanced by Howard Shore's discordant music, while a seductive and mischievous Seydoux brings an air of Morgan le Fay-like mystery to her role.

Cronenberg, meanwhile, makes nods in the direction of classical tragedy. A grief-stricken mother murders her own child in an act of fury against the father. This father is prepared to sacrifice his own son's body parts in the name of scientific progress, or at least of entertainment.

Crimes of the Future is likely to be regarded as an intriguing but relatively minor late work in its director's oeuvre. He is again exploring familiar themes. The film is highly stylised, shot almost entirely in dimly lit interiors. It has an air of gothic S&M-style kitsch. There is also a lot of nudity, but Cronenberg depicts bodies as if they're synthetic casings for all the pulsating organs underneath. Those are his real points of interest. This is a film rich in ideas but with very little tension or passion. At times, it's more like a cerebral art gallery installation piece than a full-blooded dramatic movie. *By Geoffrey Macnab*

'Crimes of the Future' is in cinemas from 9 September

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Section 2/ Album reviews

Back on the crazy train...

Ozzy Osbourne's 'Patient Number 9' is everything you would expect from the Prince of Darkness, writes **Mark Beaumont**. Plus themes of survival and sadness on Julian Lennon's 'Jude'



A host of rock legends join Ozzy on songs about graveyards, vampires and Satan (Ross Halfin)

★★★★☆☆

"I will get back on stage if it fucking kills me," bat sommelier of legend Ozzy Osbourne told *The Independent* recently. Aged 73, and recently diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, Osbourne has

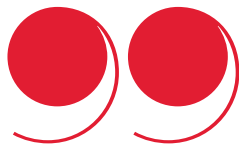
rediscovered the determination of the devil. *Patient No 9* is his second album in as many years and, like his 2020 comeback album *Ordinary Man* (released seven years after the Black Sabbath reunion album *13* and a decade on from his previous solo record), it's a rejuvenated and starry proposition.

While *Ordinary Man* featured collaborations with Elton John, Post Malone, Tom Morello, Charlie Puth, Travis Scott and most of Guns N' Roses, *Patient No 9* is a roll-call of more hardcore heroes: alongside the returning Roses are Josh Homme, Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck, and various members of Jane's Addiction, Metallica, Pearl Jam and Red Hot Chili Peppers. Foo Fighters' late drummer Taylor Hawkins makes an appearance too, as does Osbourne's Black Sabbath demon-in-arms Tony Iommi. The acolytes are gathering in tribute but, considering the contemporary crunch of the album under producer Andrew Watt's guiding hand, it would be foolhardy indeed to consider *Patient No 9* a swansong.

Not that Osbourne himself is brimming with optimism here; from the sound of it his quad biking days are well behind him. "Gone are the yesterdays, tomorrow's getting cold," he warbles on the Iommi collaboration "No Escape From Now". Even though the song's doom rock dolour eventually bursts into life as Osbourne clambers from the grave in its second half and sets about wreaking undead revenge on his enemies, an anguished fatalism soaks the record. "Mr Darkness" finds him writing a letter to Satan announcing his suicide. "My life has become the setting sun," he bewails on "God Only Knows", a canyon metal dirge featuring Dave Navarro that's as far from a Beach Boys cover as you can get.



Even though the song's doom rock dolour eventually bursts into life as Osbourne clammers from the grave and sets about wreaking undead revenge on his enemies, an anguished fatalism soaks the record



His Parkinson's diagnosis, and the mental ravages of age in general, colour several tracks in particularly tragic tones. The goliath rock title track has him "making friends with strangers inside my head because they seem to know me well" and musing "if there's a God why'd he let the devil do his work on me?". On "A Thousand Shades" (of darkness, natch) his memories are "fading like photographs"; album highlight "Nothing Feels Right" finds him being beaten up by his own reflection. He sees little hope for humanity too. "Burning nations" are "dancing in smoke" on the monolithic country rocker "One of Those Days" as Clapton delivers an equally incendiary solo, while "Dead and Gone" notes "a circus of madmen running the show".

The record is more fun than the lyrics suggest. Watt's production flirts with Muse's epic grandeur and the anthemic metal of a Red Rocks Oasis. "Immortal" is a vampiric lark, the open diary of an everyday Nosferatu. And the guest guitarists have the time of their life splurging onto Osbourne's metallic canvas – *Patient No 9* is an air guitarist's dream. But by the time he's rhyming "asphyxiation, masturbation, degradation" on the Hawkins co-write "Degradation Rules" – the second Iommi appearance – things are getting a little ridiculous, and at over an hour the record drags. Here's hoping a triumphant comeback

tour inspires a leaner direction for the Prince of Darkness's late-hour reawakening.



Jude – Julian Lennon ★★★★★

Calling his seventh album *Jude* was an act of reclamation for Julian Lennon. In a recent interview, the 59-year-old explained that, while 1968 song “Hey, Jude” is “a great chanting song, a favourite Beatles song”, for him it had always been “a harsh reminder of what actually happened in *my* life, which was that my father [John Lennon] walked out on my mother [Cynthia] and me. That was a truly, truly difficult time.” Paul McCartney wrote the ballad to comfort his bandmate’s six-year-old son (originally calling it “Hey Jules”). John, rather typically, assumed that his bandmate had written it for him, as a blessing on his new relationship with Yoko Ono. No wonder Julian finally changed his birth name – John Charles Julian Lennon – to Julian Charles John in 2020.

Emotional echoes of this complicated public history reverberate through *Jude*’s solid collection of mature mid-tempo rockers and ballads. Lennon’s lyrics repeatedly circle themes of trust betrayed, the slog of survival and a wary yearning for new beginnings. “Save me/ Help me/ I feel I’ve lost control...” he sings, in his light, nasal graze of a voice on opener “Save Me”. It’s a track that builds from a mournful piano base into a confident crescendo of pounding 4/4 drums and strings swirling

up and down Eastern semitones. Lennon says he wrote the song while looking in the mirror during the pandemic. So the lifelong loner (who struggled to make friends at school and still doesn't consider himself part of the music scene) was pleading with his own reflection for assistance: "You're the only one I know who lets the darkness come and go inside..."

There's more isolation on the romantic "Not One Night" (where he sounds most like his dad), on which he croons of lost love over an elegant cello and simple acoustic strum: "Loneliness has come knocking at my door, but now that don't phase me any more." There's a prowling, 007-style guitar line on "Round and Round" as he laments: "I've had enough of sadness and tears, flying solo, counting the years, just killing time." He's spoken recently of his struggles with anxiety and panic attacks – you can hear him choking the fear down.



It's not just personal trauma from which Lennon is protecting himself. He also gets political. He's best known for singing in defence of the planet, after all



Lennon's production is clean, steely and a little claustrophobic. The space it conjures is that of a state-of-the-art panic room. Weighty drum beats slot perfectly into place like the bolts of a lock. Keyboard patterns – such as the one that underpins "Freedom" – have the impersonal repetition of access codes. There's a smooth, metallic sheen to the guitars. The rolling bass line on "Every Little Moment" feels compressed densely enough to withstand explosives.

It's not just personal trauma from which Lennon is protecting himself. He also gets political. He's best known for singing in defence of the planet, after all. My kids sing his 1991 hit "Saltwater" once a week in assembly. On "Breathe" (surprisingly spacious in mood for such an angry song) he rips into leaders who had lost the trust of their people: "The road ahead is paved with gold/ I can't believe the lies they've told/ There's no more vision to behold/ We've lost it all, we've all been sold."

He's joined by The Blue Nile's brilliant Paul Buchanan and French singer Elissa Lauper on "Gaia" for a dreamy fade-out of a finale, complete with the very Beatles-y message that "love finds a way to brighten up the darkest day". Buchanan's gnarly keening after the "raging waves, the love we crave" is perfectly balanced by Lauper's breathy invocations of "le soleil et la lune, le ciel et la terre, ice et la" (even if her parts do sound a bit like the pretentiously whispery voiceover of a perfume commercial... "Jude, pour personne"). There are nods to the Beatles' mindblown "Because" in both the melody and the vibe. It's a sad, drifting kind of a song, but the heart Lennon puts into it makes everything feel, briefly, better. *Helen Brown*

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Section 2/ Theatre review

HEARTS OF GLASS

Atri Banerjee's production of Tennessee Williams's 'The Glass Menagerie' at the Royal Exchange draws poignantly on the isolation of the past few years, writes **Holly Williams**



Geraldine Somerville and Rhiannon Clements in 'The Glass Menagerie' (Marc Brenner)

★★★★☆

At last, Atri Banerjee's production of Tennessee Williams's play sees the light: it was due to be staged in spring 2020. While the

cast and team have re-assembled, Banerjee and designer Rosanna Vize completely reworked their plans, to take into account what we've all been through since then.

It's true that this portrait of an isolated, claustrophobic family – stuck in a small St Louis flat but each really living within their own dream world – now has a freshly poignant tug on the old heartstrings. But the biggest change to this production appears to be the highly literal reminder of how the promise of a brighter life remains just out of reach for these characters: spinning above the action is a huge neon sign reading “PARADISE”. As well as an unignorable reminder of unfulfilled hope, it is also a concrete reference to the Paradise Dance Hall across the street – its music and illumination offering distraction for lives “without any change or adventure”. Lighting designer Lee Curran uses the sign, too, to re-enforce emotional states; it glows or dims, spinning faster or slower, in agitation, boredom or honeyed memory.

Set in 1937 and based on Williams's own youth, *The Glass Menagerie* is declared in an introduction to be a “memory play”: the son, Tom, looks back on life with a painfully shy, disabled sister Laura and their overbearing, Southern Belle mother Amanda. Everyone is stifled. Tom wants to be a poet, but works in a warehouse; Amanda is obsessed with the lost glories of her youth and with finding a “gentleman caller” to marry Laura, while Laura retreats into old records and tending to her collection of tiny glass animals.

In this confident, stylish production, Banerjee runs with Tom's offer that, because this is a memory play, “it is dimly lighted, it is sentimental, it is not realistic. In memory, everything seems to happen to music. That explains the fiddle in the wings.” Out goes the naturalistic apartment with a fire escape; instead, a ring of squint-to-see-'em glass figurines sit next to small speakers playing a murmuring underscore of strings (composed by Giles Thomas). In modern clothes – Laura boasts a Molly Goddard-style neon net dress – the characters circle the space, often walking backwards as if through those memories.



Dream world: Erika Ivo as Jim, Rhiannon Clements as Laura and Geraldine Somerville as Amanda (Marc Brenner)

But the question of whose memory – and whose story – is being told is given a welcome workout. In a pivotal scene, a friend of Tom's named Jim visits, and seems to make a genuine connection with Laura. But it's a private moment, so how would Tom remember it? Banerjee leans into the idea that this might be Laura's story, or Laura's fantasy. She and Jim have a wild, gloriously romantic dance number to Whitney Houston – further turning the screws on Laura's fragile hope, and our hope for her.

Rhiannon Clements is gorgeously tender as Laura, but also has spirit. She seems stuck in teenage self-consciousness: she gets moodily frustrated with her mother, and is so mortified at having thrown up at her business studies class that she's too embarrassed to go back. But when she talks about walking all over town alone, you register some independent adventurousness.

There's a pathos to the casting of Amanda: Geraldine Somerville made her debut on this stage as Laura in 1989; now she returns as the matriarch. The weight of Amanda's own tragedy doesn't always land, but Somerville delivers her cloying, delusional performance of Southern manners, all fluttering and fluting, and brings out the wince-inducing comedy of the text. As does the brilliant Joshua James, who makes Tom withering and acerbic, newly minting many lines as laugh-out-loud funny. Add Erika

Ivo's sexy heat and careless flirtiness as Jim, the longed-for gentleman caller, and it all adds up to a crackling production – casting a new, neon light on Williams's play.

'The Glass Menagerie' is at the Royal Exchange, Manchester until 8 October

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Small businesses criticise Truss's 'vague' support plan

No 10's six-month energy plan 'leaves us in limbo', say firms



Real grind: Cafe owner Craig Bunting says only 'decisive action' will stop independent businesses closing (PA)

DANIELLE DESOUZA

Small firms have said the prime minister's energy price pledge for businesses could be a "lifeline" but warned they cannot remain in "limbo" for the next three months.

It comes after warnings earlier this week that tens of thousands of UK businesses could be forced to fold without help to address spiralling energy bills.

Prime minister Liz Truss announced plans to freeze energy bills for households at no more than £2,500 yesterday

She added that businesses, which are not covered by an energy price cap, will receive a six-month scheme of “equivalent” support.



The new PM announced small businesses will get ‘equivalent support’ to households (PA)

Ms Truss stressed that there will also be ongoing support for the most vulnerable industries, highlighting the hospitality sector, with a review in three months’ time to decide where the help should be targeted.

The government has held back on further details about support for firms and said the business secretary, Jacob Rees-Mogg, will first speak to industries during a three-month review process.

Small business owners and industry leaders said the action was welcomed but said more information is needed quickly for them to plan their future amid record gas prices.

Craig Bunting, owner of Derby-based coffee shop Bear, said urgent action is needed for hospitality firms.

“Whilst the energy cap is incredibly important, hospitality businesses cannot wait for three months in limbo,” he said.

“Decisive action on 10 per cent VAT and zero business rates

would immediately stop many independent hospitality businesses from closing.”

The director of a micropub in Cheltenham also labelled Ms Truss’s plan to help businesses as “vague”.

Paul Cook, 50, who is one of the directors of the Angry Parrot pub, told the PA news agency that he was left with many questions following her announcement in parliament.

“How much will their bills increase by? Will they still increase? Will it still be silly money?” he asked.

“It’s very vague, it’s only for six months. What happens after six months when it is the winter and people are cutting back because their bills have gone up significantly?

“It’s not a win-win at all, it just leaves businesses in a bit of a limbo really because we just don’t know what’s going to happen.”



Six months’ support is ‘not going to help anybody’, says Robert Chapman (left), owner of Kavanagh’s cafe and tea rooms (PA)

Meanwhile, Robert Chapman, 57, who runs a cafe and tea rooms in Beverley, in the East Riding of Yorkshire, with his wife Catherine, 59, told the PA news agency that the current six-month proposal “doesn’t seem long enough”.

“We work on much longer cycles than six months to make decisions on hiring, on investment... and a six-month period of just waiting is not going to help anybody,” he said.

He added that he is most concerned about consumer spending over the next six months as the business cannot “survive” without customers and that he hoped for “some sort of return to VAT rates that were in existence before the Covid crisis”.

Martin McTague, national chair at the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), said: “It’s a huge relief for millions of small businesses to hear confirmation they will be part of the government’s plans to help on energy.

“Many have been pushed to the brink by crippling energy bills, and so it is welcome that help is on the way. Done right, this will be a lifeline – protecting jobs, communities and future economic recovery.

“However, the announcement is very high-level and sparse on detail so we will be working with the new government to clarify what happens next.

“Small businesses’ instant reaction is that this is not enough information, yet, for them to plan.”

PA

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Primark can weather storm but small firms lack means



Value retailer is holding its prices against the backdrop of soaring energy costs (Reuters)

JAMES MOORE

CHIEF BUSINESS COMMENTATOR

After days of speculation, the plan from Liz Truss to tackle soaring energy costs has been announced; consumers' energy bills will be frozen at £2,500 for the next two years.

A secondary package of support for businesses and institutions such as schools has also been announced, but that lasts only six months and the details are sketchy.

Let's deal with consumers first. In addition to the bill freeze, the £400 rebate already promised to domestic consumers covered by Ofgem's price cap will continue to be paid, and £150 of green levies will be scrapped, further reducing costs.

The rebate will not be there next year, so bills will rise then unless we see an unlikely Goldilocks scenario emerging on the global markets. As winter usage ramps up, consumers will still be paying a lot more than they were this time last year, when the annual equivalent figure for a typical family was £1,271.

However, the freeze affects unit prices, which means you'll pay less if you use less. Whichever way you cut it, the plan represents a vast improvement on the sort of prices predicted by some forecasters. Figures of £6,000 were being bandied around, which you can file under "disastrous".

But how consumers will react to paying even a penny more when oil giants and other energy companies are throwing off cash and using it to buy back shares with wild abandon remains to be seen.

They may well wonder why the exorbitant cost of this package, which some forecasters say could reach £150bn or more, isn't being better shared. Labour's calls for a fresh windfall tax on energy giants will continue to resonate.



The government risks spending billions on simply delaying an insolvency and jobs crisis if it tries to hold the line



There is a real ideological divide between the two parties here. The argument is one that Labour can win, not least because Josephine taxpayer is going to have to pay it back in some form.

Don't let's kid ourselves this is a loan we're all taking out. It's just one which may be paid for in lost schools or hospitals or police officers down the line. Does team Truss really think it will be able to limit business support to six months if prices are still up in the stratosphere next spring?

The struggles businesses are facing was made clear by Primark, which yesterday cited energy costs in its store estate in a nasty profit warning, along with the declining disposable income of customers and the strengthening of the US dollar, heightening the cost of the clothes it imports, most of which are made in Asia.

Primark is holding its prices against that backdrop, which it can do because it is a highly successful business and low prices are a key differentiator and part of its model. The point was underlined when Kate Beckinsale was pictured in an £8 Primark swimsuit adorned with the logo of value food chain, Greggs.

Primark is part of Associated British Foods. It has the financial firepower to cope. Smaller businesses don't. Ditto some larger ones, big manufacturers for example. Then there are schools.

The government risks spending billions on simply delaying an insolvency and jobs crisis if it tries to hold the line. It's doubtful that it will be able to do that if things are still looking bad six months closer to a general election with a truckload of other economic nasties biting down.

It insists some of the costs of its package will at least be defrayed through a reduced headline inflation figure, which will reduce the cost of government debt repayments. Labour's "fully funded" freeze plan also called on this wheeze.

But that's little comfort and there remain unanswered questions, not least how the Bank of England will respond to what is an enormous stimulus. Trussonomics round one has headed off an immediate crisis but there are pitfalls ahead.

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Business news in brief



The Restaurant Group saw dip in demand during summer months (PA)

Wagamama owner's profits jump but heatwave weighs on dining

The Restaurant Group swung to a profit in the past six months as diners returned post-Covid but said its chain saw demand dip during the summer heatwave. The hospitality giant said like-for-like sales slowed at Wagamama and its leisure brands, including Frankie & Benny's, during July and August. The group, which also owns BarBurrito, posted a £10.2m adjusted pre-tax profit for the six months to 3 July, compared with a £19.9m loss over the same period last year. *PA*

Lloyd's of London puts aside £1.1bn for Ukraine claims

Lloyd's of London has set aside more than £1bn to cover insurance claims from the Ukraine war as the leading insurance market flagged a challenging year of natural disasters, high inflation and geopolitical challenges. Lloyd's revealed it had put aside £1.1bn of reinsurance for customers impacted by the war. As a big insurer of cargo and aviation, it has been hit by planes being grounded and ships stranded as a result of the conflict – not long after suffering the impacts of the pandemic. Half-year figures showed the marketplace swung to a loss in the first half of the year, posting a deficit of £1.8bn against a £1.4bn profit made during the same period last year. *PA*

Takeover of McColl's will 'not harm majority of shoppers'

Morrisons' takeover of convenience chain McColl's will "not harm the vast majority of shoppers or other businesses", the competition regulator has said following a probe of the deal. The Competition and Markets Authority said its initial investigations found 35 local areas where the two brands would compete. The Bradford-based supermarket chain agreed to buy McColl's in a rescue deal in May after the retailer collapsed into administration in light of soaring costs due to supply chain disruption, inflation and its large debt burden. Morrisons itself was acquired by US private equity firm Clayton, Dubilier & Rice for £7bn last year. *PA*

Darktrace shares dive after firm pulls out of bid talks

Shares in UK cyber-security specialist Darktrace plunged by a third yesterday after a private equity suitor confirmed it would not make a bid. US tech-focused firm Thoma Bravo said last month it was in talks over a potential cash takeover of the firm, then valued at around £2.7bn. However, Darktrace told shareholders on Thursday "an agreement could not be reached on the terms of a firm offer". Its founder Mike Lynch is facing

extradition to the US over fraud charges – hailed strong revenue growth and held firm on recent financial targets. *PA*

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Potter ready for Chelsea's irresistible coaching job



The question of whether a move from Brighton to Chelsea is right for Potter's own career is simple to answer (Getty)

MIGUEL DELANEY

CHIEF FOOTBALL WRITER

By the time that Graham Potter got to sit down with the Chelsea hierarchy, the talks were strikingly straightforward. Both sides

had a clear vision of what they wanted. Chelsea have been considering Potter for weeks. They think he is precisely the personality profile they want, as well as a hugely promising manager. He has meanwhile outlined in detail what he can do with this squad.

The situation has been proceeding with such a speed, in fact, that it's fair to wonder whether anyone involved has actually stopped to consider whether this is actually the right time. Could Potter not just wait to try and give Brighton the brilliant season this promises to be? Could Chelsea not wait until he's offered the proof of an achievement like that? Do the big six really have to go and snatch up anything interesting that comes from the depths below them? Should Potter not wait for a surer thing, and not a situation so unknown?

The reality is that there is almost never a perfect time or situation in football. One of Potter's rivals for the job, in Mauricio Pochettino, could tell him that. So could Brendan Rodgers. Six months ago, the Leicester City manager would have been the obvious candidate. There is now talk of whether Brighton might suit him, as Chelsea are not even looking.

All of this discussion, as with everything now, is shaped by the economic framework of the modern game. It in this case sharpens a truth almost anyone can relate to. You often have to take these chances as they come. There are few guarantees. Such is the precariousness of the Premier League beyond the big six that the wrong player sale, or the wrong run, can completely change your position and your perception. As exceptional as Brighton have been in recruitment, as an example, Leicester are proof that you can't indefinitely sell your better players without eventually suffering a dip.

It can go wrong quite quickly, no matter how well you are run. It is only a few months ago that Brighton were getting booed for not shooting. He wouldn't have been considered for this job then. That isn't necessarily a reflection of anyone's coaching ability. It's just what happens in a relatively chaotic middle tier with more mediocre players.

So, far from risking being out of favour in eight months – or even just going through another season of solid stability – it is instead feasible that Potter could win the Champions League in that time. He will at least get to test himself at that level, something he would only have seen as a far-off ambition when at Ostersunds for seven years. In that context, as well as what it does for his family, it is not really a question at all. The choice is obvious.

It's not about money. It's about trying to reach the top and make the best of your ability. Holding up the Champions League trophy is what they are in it for. It is why the question of what is right for Potter's own career is different to what is right for the game. It is possible to entirely understand the 47-year-old's decision and simultaneously lament what it means for anyone outside the big six. The gap is so great now that Potter pretty much has to consider the approach, since the same forces mean he can't really dream of anything so great at the Amex.

What would constitute success with Brighton this season, after all? A cup run? European qualification? Both of those tend to get shut down by the big six, for precisely the same reason Chelsea are going for Potter. These clubs accumulate most of the resources so accumulate all the talent, the better the quicker.



Potter enjoyed a fine spell at Brighton (PA)

The tragedy is how fixed it makes the entire game. Any time there is anything interesting elsewhere, or a sign of something

different, the same big names come along. And if it doesn't work out? Well then Chelsea can just chew him up and go for the next option. That points to why there are some risks for both parties, again related to that gap.

Potter has never faced the scrutiny of a club like this. There is an immense difference between a bad run in mid-table and three games without a win at Chelsea, all the more so when you don't have the guarantee of prior success. It is why some in the game talk of a recruitment issue among managers as well. The super clubs often go for the same circuit of names because they all require evidence a manager can do it at their level. Reaching a Champions League semi-final with Ajax, as even Erik ten Hag has found out, is not the same as restoring Manchester United.

This is why, since the "big six" became established around 2012, there have only been four occasions when they have effectively promoted a manager from a permanent job in the English league. These were: Rodgers from Swansea City to Liverpool; David Moyes from Everton to Manchester United; Pochettino from Southampton to Tottenham Hotspur; Frank Lampard from Derby County to Chelsea. Even Lampard only really got the job because Chelsea were going through a transfer ban and he offered the emotional connection that altered the dynamic. It was similar with a restructuring Arsenal giving Mikel Arteta his first job.

Chelsea, for their part, now want to go a different way. The new owners want this first managerial appointment to be something of a mission statement for the way forward, to show what they are about. That is a personality that fully buys into the approach. It's not just about ad hoc winning but succeeding as part of a greater culture, while bringing through young players in a progressive ideal of football.

That, at least, has been the pitch. Results, as Thomas Tuchel found, can quickly change any deeper principles. Potter is going to find that, too. It's a more difficult challenge than he's ever had. That is precisely why it's so difficult to turn down. Quite the opposite. He is more than willing to go for it.

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Disputed La Real penalty ends United's resurgence

Manchester United	0
Real Sociedad	1
Mendez (59 pen)	



Real Sociedad midfielder Brais Mendez celebrates scoring after a contentious handball penalty (AFP via Getty)

MARK CRITCHLEY
OLD TRAFFORD

Manchester United's Europa League campaign began with defeat to Real Sociedad on a subdued night at Old Trafford. The death of Queen Elizabeth II was confirmed only an hour-and-a-half before kick-off but the game went ahead following consultations with the governing bodies. Brais Mendez's second-half penalty, controversially awarded against Lisandro Martinez for handball, ended Erik ten Hag's restorative winning streak at four games and left United with work to do in Group E.

The news of the Queen's death broke with fans already sat in their seats. Postponement at such short notice was unlikely. Instead, as a mark of respect, both sets of players wore black armbands, the pitch side advertising boards were blanked out and flags flew at half-mast, if they flew at all. A minute's silence was also held before kick-off and impeccably observed by all four corners of Old Trafford, with the travelling la Real supporters respectfully holding their scarves aloft as one.

On the pitch, Ten Hag recalled several senior players who have watched United's early season resurgence from the sidelines. Cristiano Ronaldo started for the first time since the 4-0 hammering at Brentford, as did captain Harry Maguire, while Casemiro made his full debut at the base of midfield as he continues to get up to speed with his new manager's style of play. Perhaps most interesting of all was a run-out in the No 10 role for Fred, his usual hard running and intense pressing deployed further up the pitch.

The sombre circumstances of the evening did not especially quieten the crowd or dull the atmosphere but perhaps contributed to a flat, uneventful first half. Perhaps unsurprisingly, United's best moments ended with Ronaldo, but the five-time Ballon d'Or winner's decision-making left something to be desired and demonstrated why he is currently fulfilling the role of second-choice striker under Ten Hag. An early dart in behind la Real's defence resulted in a poor touch, loss of possession and the offside flag being raised.

Ronaldo was flagged again by the same assistant referee when heading a Diogo Dalot cross onto the underside of the crossbar, off goalkeeper Alejandro Remiro's right glove and in after 35

minutes. His timings were off once more at the start of the second half, when arriving too late to meet a cross from substitute Bruno Fernandes. All this only seemed to make Ronaldo more and more desperate to score the goal that would prove to Ten Hag that he deserves to be starting regularly, but it would not come. Instead, la Real took the lead.

The decision to penalise Martinez for the penalty seemed at best harsh, at worst nonsensical. David Silva's shot had hit his thigh and bounced up onto his arm while he was in the process of sliding in to block. It was not an unnatural position for his arms to be in. It was hard to imagine his arms being anywhere else. Ten Hag remonstrated with the fourth official but Massimiliano Irrati, the VAR, did not intervene and referee Marco di Bello's decision stood. De Gea guessed correctly, diving to his left, but could not stop Mendez from finding the corner.

If it was a cruel penalty to concede, it was not exactly a goal out of nothing. La Real had threatened in the minutes leading up to their breakthrough, with winger Takefusa Kubo causing issues down United's right and Martinez being tested in direct combat with all 6ft 5in of former Crystal Palace target man Alexander Sorloth. The onus was now on United, and Ten Hag sought fresh impetus from the bench by introducing Jadon Sancho and youngster Alejandro Garnacho. But their impact was limited. Remiro was only truly made to work by a long-range effort from Casemiro, which was parried away easily.

That was United's only shot on target in an underwhelming second-half performance. Presumably, Ten Hag will not be too troubled by the defeat or the display behind it, not least because of the unique circumstances – in line with other English clubs in European competition, the United manager did not hold a post-match press conference – but after the optimism of recent weeks, it served as a reminder of the work still to do.

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Watershed defeat leaves Liverpool facing end of era

Time may have run out after a heavy loss against Napoli



Virgil van Dijk during Liverpool's Champions League defeat against Napoli (Liverpool FC/Getty)

RICHARD JOLLY

SENIOR FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT

The first time Jurgen Klopp brought a team to Naples, he made an explosive exit. Then Borussia Dortmund manager, he was

sent to the stands. All of which might have seemed preferable to a vigil on the touchline, watching his Liverpool plumb new depths. Conceding four goals in the first 47 minutes gave him plenty of time to ponder. His departure was contrite this time, arms raised in apology to the Liverpool fans. Their visit to their least favourite ground was even less enjoyable than usual.

The euphoric celebrations in front of an adoring home crowd felt Klopp-esque, but came from Napoli. For the German, there was instead a disconsolate trudge back to the tunnel and an acknowledgement that could prove a watershed moment. Sometimes it takes spectacular scorelines to bring change and, after Napoli demolished Liverpool to win 4-1, Klopp said: “It looks like we have to reinvent ourselves.”

The caveat was that his version of reinvention sounded like a return to the immediate past, rather than a promise of revolution. “Everybody would be happy if we could play the stuff we used to play,” he said; only a few months ago, too. The aim is to restore the basics, to become horrible to play against by putting opponents under pressure.

For Klopp, being compact is a compliment and he could not remember seeing his side less compact; Andy Robertson concurred in his unsparing analysis. “The way we were wide open they found so many spaces,” the Scot said. But, the manager said, his high defensive line stays.

But if the problem was not the theory but the execution, it raises questions about the individuals involved. In part, injuries are the issue; in part, form is and it is rare that so many of Klopp’s talismans are out of form at the same time. And yet it scarcely feels as simple as saying that such things are cyclical; if it is inevitable some, and perhaps all, will play better, that does not necessarily mean their best days lie ahead.

Seven of this side had started the Champions League final; it is little more than three months ago and this was only their fourth defeat of 2022 but it came in such a manner to suggest an era is ending.

Six of them are thirty-somethings. Logically, playing something as exhausting as Kloppball for 60 games a season will take its toll.

There is increasing evidence to suggest time has finally caught up with James Milner. Pushing 37, he was playing in the Premier League before Harvey Elliott was born. Perhaps he can still win the bleep test, but not the midfield battle. Within 10 minutes, he had conceded a penalty and upended Andre-Frank Zambo Anguissa in the kind of ugly lunge where a caution feels the lesser possible punishment.



Joe Gomez fights for the ball with forward Victor Osimhen (AFP/Getty)

Alongside him, Fabinho was the target of much of Klopp's invective during the break when VAR awarded Napoli their second penalty. It was unsurprising: the Brazilian scarcely protected the creaking defence.

Yet the most jarring sights came behind him. Virgil van Dijk has started to look a mere mortal, the imperious, laidback colossus feeling more fallible. He went 150 games without conceding a penalty. Now he has given away two in seven games, with both Aleksandar Mitrovic and Victor Osimhen upended by the usual paragon of perfect judgement. Only a nonchalant goal-line clearance made him look the effortless master but whereas his calm authority used to permeate across the defence, Liverpool were ragged.

Van Dijk was still superior to his partner. Joe Gomez was atrocious, culpable for two goals and, but for the Dutchman's intervention on his line, a hat-trick of horrors; his inconsistency remains a concern when, at 25, he is no longer a young player and cannot use age, at either end of the spectrum, as an excuse. His best is a level few others can reach, his worst dreadful and they can coincide with Liverpool's most chastening games.

Gomez was dire in the 7-2 defeat to Aston Villa, the 4-0 thrashing at Manchester City and now the nightmare in Naples; he was hauled off long before the final whistle in each. Gomez was Van Dijk's finest sidekick for much of the 2019-20 season and if injuries are the main reason why he has been reinvented as fourth choice since then, the second-half introduction of Joel Matip was telling.

In a wretched rearguard, the right half felt the weaker link. Trent Alexander-Arnold was unable to contain a rampant Khvicha Kvaratskhelia; at times, he was not near enough to try.

The young Georgian graced the vast atmospheric concrete bowl. His nickname, "Kvaradona" and the former San Paolo Stadium, now the Stadio Diego Armando Maradona, stem from football's greatest left-footer. Liverpool's finest in recent times had a humbling night: Mohamed Salah was anonymous and substituted on a night to enhance the reputations of the dynamic Luis Diaz and the departed Sadio Mane.

Reinvention comes in many guises and if Klopp was left to ponder if his ageing players can again be the forces of old, Liverpool could do with Salah playing as he did when he earned the biggest contract in their history, not as he has since signing it.

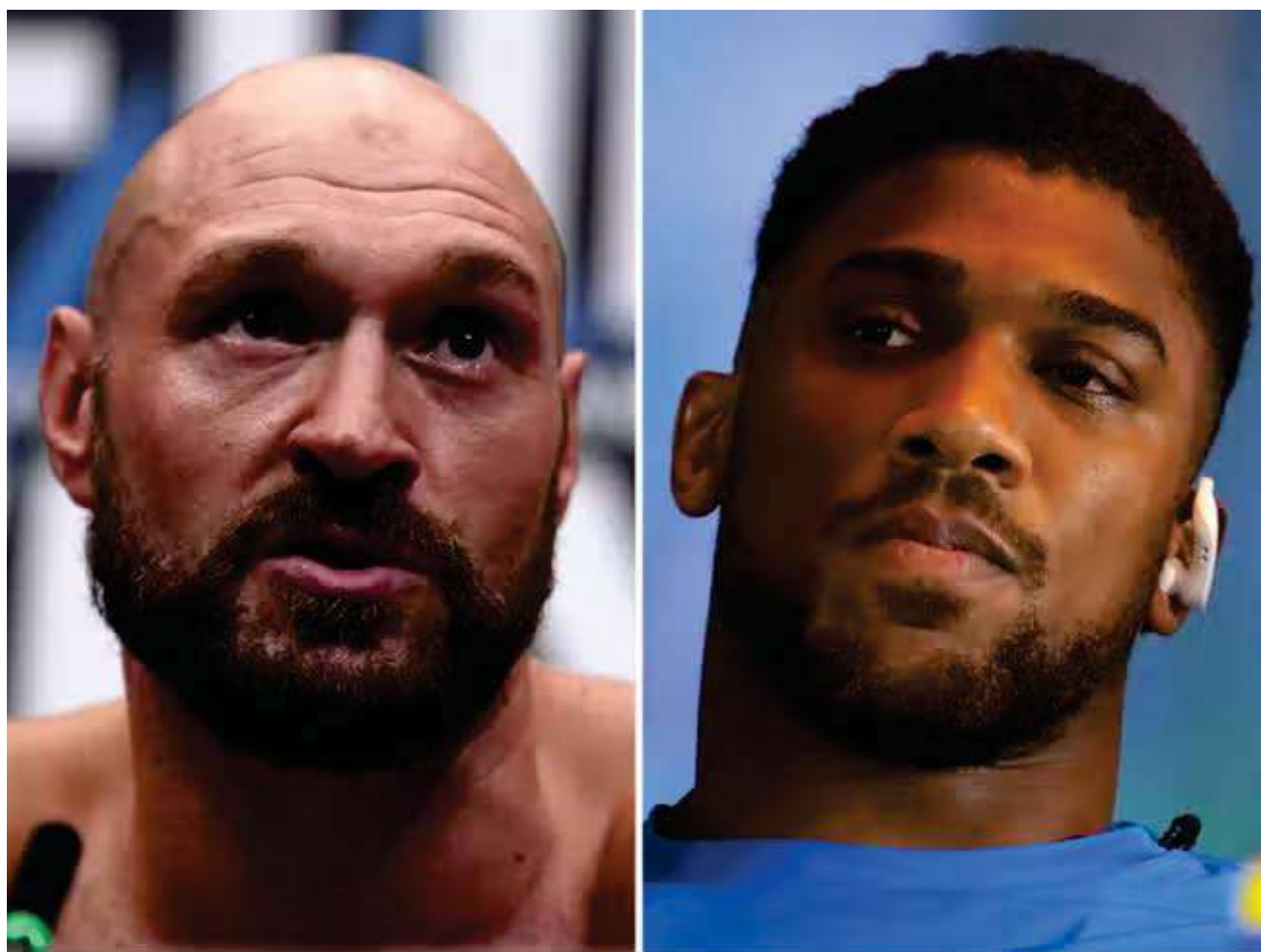
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Dealmakers can still put the mockers on Fury vs Joshua



Tyson Fury and Anthony Joshua are set to meet in Cardiff in December (PA)

STEVE BUNCE

In August of 2021, we were all going to Saudi Arabia for Tyson Fury against Anthony Joshua. Then it was called off.

Today we are all hoping that we are going to Cardiff at some point in December for the latest proposed meeting between

Fury and Joshua. That could change tonight, it could change in the morning. It might even become fact. I doubt it.

Welcome to the wild world of boxing promoting and dreams, which is a twilight zone of hype, hope, prayers, lies and excesses. According to everybody the split in purse has been agreed and that in the boxing business is a very good start. But, it is only a start.

This fight has a wonderful history.

This fight was first announced with utter confidence by Fury in June of 2020; it was the perfect blockbuster to lift the pandemic blues. That bubble burst quick.

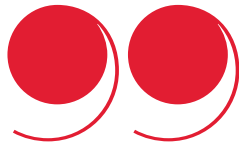
Last year there were contracts, agreements and a date all in place before it was discovered that Deontay Wilder had the right to a third fight with Fury. So, Fury and Joshua was scrapped and within hours they had alternative opponents.

Frank Warren, one of Fury's promoters, tried to keep the negotiations going as the fight collapsed. He believed it could somehow be salvaged, but he was on his own; Eddie Hearn, for Joshua, pushed on with a fight against Kubrat Pulev, and Bob Arum, for Fury, set in place the third Wilder fight. Warren kept the faith and he has been driving this latest mayhem.

Fury last fought in April when he beat Dillian Whyte in front of 95,000 at Wembley. He retired in the ring. Nobody believed him. He unretired later that night and challenged Francis Ngannou, the champion from the UFC. That carnival vanished and Fury retired again.



Welcome to the wild world of boxing promoting and dreams, which is a twilight zone of hype, hope, prayers, lies and excesses



And then the fun really started. The giant Thor was mentioned and dismissed. There was talk of a \$20m “circus” fight. In the early summer, Arum talked about Joe Joyce at Wembley in October. No chance of that. Then Fury burst out of retirement to fight Dereck Chisora and for about three days that was on. Then it was off and Fury retired again. That was about four weeks ago. Fury swore he was quitting boxing forever.

Joshua, meanwhile, was preparing for the fight of his life in a rematch with Oleksandr Usyk last month in Saudi Arabia. He lost and at midnight, as Joshua struggled with back-to-back defeats, Fury challenged both “dossers” to a fight on the same night. Steady on, son.

A few days after the Arabian dust had settled, there was bold talk of Usyk and Fury happening. They both agreed to a fight, but that is only a primitive guide in the boxing world. Usyk has an injury, that fight went and then Fury challenged Joshua. And Joshua accepted at the start of this week. It was all moving fast, too fast.

On Tuesday, Fury offered Joshua a 60-40 split and according to Hearn, that was accepted by Joshua. It was known that Fury’s British promoter, Warren, had the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff booked for 17 December. That date has been mentioned again and right now everybody involved is looking at all other

dates and figures and all the potential variables. This fight is still a long, long way from taking place.

There is, however, just a chance that it is closer now than it has ever been. I believe that both fighters want it, but again, that means very little in the boxing world where cold business dealings cancel desires and dreams.

Fury and Joshua is certainly back on the agenda for talks and there is a hope that something can be put in place. Hope and talks are just part of the deception in the old, old business of boxing.

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Sport news in brief



The British driver will be forced to take on his fourth power unit of the campaign in Monza (Reuters)

Hamilton to start Italian Grand Prix from back of grid

Lewis Hamilton will start from the back of the grid for Sunday's Italian Grand Prix following an engine penalty. The British driver will be forced to take on his fourth power unit of the campaign in Monza – one more than is allowed under Formula One's rules. Hamilton's impending punishment effectively ends his hopes of fighting for victory, a week after he apologised for accusing his team of "fucking screwing" him following a strategy blunder at the Dutch Grand Prix.

The seven-time world champion might have been able to reach the end of the 22-race campaign using three engines before his opening-lap collision with Fernando Alonso in Spa-Francorchamps a fortnight ago. Hamilton was launched airborne after he made contact with the Spaniard – an accident which saw Alonso label Hamilton an “idiot”.

He sustained a water leak following the impact of the crash and Mercedes do not believe the engine is fit-for-use in its full capacity. A Mercedes spokesperson said: “We will be fitting a fourth power unit this weekend for Lewis. This is because, although we are still working on the recovery plan for the power unit that was damaged in Spa, that unit cannot be run this weekend.” The high-speed Monza track will provide Hamilton with the chance to fight back through the pack.

But yesterday’s news will come as a yet another blow in a turbulent campaign. Hamilton, who has not won a race since the Saudi Arabian Grand Prix last year, is 152 points behind runaway championship leader Max Verstappen, and 30 points adrift of teammate George Russell. *PA*

West Ham comfortably beat Romania’s FCSB

West Ham’s European campaign began with a 3-1 win against Romanian side FCSB in a match only played due to concerns over fan safety. The opening Europa Conference League Group B encounter went ahead at the London Stadium despite the news of the Queen’s death, following direction from the FA and UEFA.

There were talks between the governing bodies and West Ham about calling the game off. But it was decided that with thousands of supporters, including 3,000 from Romania, already in the stadium when the announcement from Buckingham Palace came, the match should go ahead.

So, in the heart of the Olympic Park named after Queen Elizabeth, there was a minute’s reflection before kick-off and a

spontaneous chorus of “God Save The Queen” from the crowd, while players from both clubs wore black armbands.

Then goals from Jarrod Bowen, Emerson Palmieri and Michail Antonio ensured West Ham, twice knocked out of the Europa League by Romanian side Astra Giurgiu in 2015 and 2016, came from behind to beat a team lying 13th in the country’s Liga 1. *PA*

Marquinhos and Nketiah fire Arsenal to win in Europa League

Arsenal’s winning start to their Europa League campaign was overshadowed by the death of the Queen as their players and those of FC Zurich held a minute’s silence before the start of the second half in Switzerland. The announcement came from Buckingham Palace during the interval in St Gallen, where Arsenal secured a 2-1 victory in their opening Group A encounter.

Mikel Arteta made seven changes from the Premier League defeat to Manchester United with Marquinhos impressing on his senior debut with a goal and an assist. The 19-year-old opened the scoring with a well-taken finish after good work from Fabio Vieira, making his full debut, and Eddie Nketiah. Vieira could not double the lead after lifting an effort over the crossbar following a fine run which saw him latch onto a smart Albert Sambi Lokonga pass.

Switzerland captain Granit Xhaka arrowed a shot wide with Vieira impressing in midfield as Arsenal began to dominate, only to concede a penalty three minutes before the break. Nketiah was adjudged to have fouled Fidan Aliti inside the box and Mirllind Kryeziu made no mistake from the spot, sending debutant goalkeeper Matt Turner the wrong way to level.

With the news breaking of the Queen’s death during half-time, the Arsenal players re-emerged wearing black armbands as the two sides congregated around the centre-circle for a minute’s silence, while an image of the Queen was shown on the big screen.

Once the game was back under way, Nketiah fired just over the bar from the edge of the box but would ultimately make up for his earlier error by putting Arsenal back in front, his downward header from a Marquinhos cross greeted with muted celebrations just after the hour. That proved to be enough to secure the three points, with PSV Eindhoven next up for Arteta's side. *PA*

Play suspended at Wentworth after Queen's death

Play was suspended late in the first round of the BMW PGA Championship on the European tour yesterday following the announcement of the death of Queen Elizabeth II at the age of 96. Thirty of the 144 players in the field had yet to finish their first rounds at Wentworth. The tour said there would be no play today and flags at the club were lowered to half-mast "out of respect for Her Majesty and the Royal Family".

"Further updates on the resumption of play will be provided in due course," the tour said. Tommy Fleetwood, Andy Sullivan and Viktor Hovland shared the clubhouse lead after shooting 8-under 64s. English golfer Matthew Jordan was a shot further back after a round of 65. Fleetwood, playing his first event since the British Open in July, birdied six of his final seven holes — the highlight being a 26-foot putt at No 16.

He later wrote a tribute to the queen on Twitter, saying: "Rest in Peace Your Majesty, you will be forever in our hearts. God save The King." Hovland also had a strong finish, going birdie-birdie-eagle from No. 16. Sullivan, who recovered from an opening bogey, would have taken the outright lead if he had made a birdie putt from 6 feet at the 18th but he missed.

Tensions between LIV golfers and those players who have shunned the Saudi-backed breakaway series dominated the build-up to the tour's flagship event held at its headquarters outside London. Abraham Ancer, a LIV golfer whose presence at Wentworth was questioned by defending champion Billy Horschel and Jon Rahm, shot 4 under and was in a tie for 11th place along with Horschel and Rory McIlroy. *AP*

Kyrgios handed US Open's biggest fine for behaviour

Nick Kyrgios departed the US Open with the biggest fine of the tournament for indiscretions during his quarter-final defeat by Karen Khachanov on Tuesday.

The Australian was given a warning during the third set for slamming a drink bottle to the ground in anger and then took out his frustration at the end of the five-set loss by destroying two rackets. The offences have cost him 14,000 US dollars (approximately £12,000) to take his overall fines tally to 32,500 dollars (approximately £28,000) – by far the highest of any player.

The fine was Kyrgios' fifth separate offence of the tournament, with previous sanctions coming for spitting, swearing and smashing rackets. The amount is still dwarfed by his prize money for the tournament across singles and doubles of 473,200 dollars (approximately £411,000). Kyrgios made no attempt to hide his disappointment at the loss as he sought a first grand slam singles title.

He said: "I honestly feel like shit. I feel like I've let so many people down. I feel like these four tournaments are the only ones that ever are going to matter. It's just like you've got to start it all again. I have to wait until the Australian Open. It's just devastating. It's heart-breaking. Not just for me, but for everyone that I know that wants me to win." Khachanov will take on Casper Ruud in the semi-finals today. *PA*

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